

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

A. E. COPPARD: HIS LIFE AND HIS
POETRY TO THE PUBLICATION
OF THE "BIBLIOGRAPHY"
(1931)

GEORGE BRANDON SAUL

A THESIS
IN ENGLISH

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA

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GEORGE BRANDON SAUL



PREFACE

I am under obligations to numerous sources for much aid directly or indirectly extended me during the preparation of this dissertation. Most of all, I am indebted to Mr. Coppard himself, who graciously consented to my undertaking what must have been for him an embarrassing subject, gave me permission to reprint extracts from his work, answered patiently many questions (some of which must have seemed impertinent), and considerably provided numerous clippings of various sorts; to him I trust that my work, carried out in a spirit of genuine admiration of his art, will at least give neither offense nor discomfiture: were it to do either, I should be deeply sorry.

I am further indebted to Professor Cornelius Weygandt, of Pennsylvania, for approval of my topic and for general coöperation in its development; to Mr. Godfrey Singer, also of Pennsylvania, for the loan of his copy of *Count Stefan*; to Mr. Alfred A. Knopf, for the loan of his file of reviews of *Collected Poems*, and for his most courteous interest; to Mr. P. Gilchrist Thompson, of *Jonathan Cape, Ltd.*, London, for the loan of several files of reviews; to Mr. Robert Gibbings, of the *Golden Cockerel Press*, for information anent reviews (and a jolly letter); to Mr. Harold Mason, of the *Centaur Bookshop*, Philadelphia, for the loan of reviews; to the editors of *The New Republic*, for permission to reprint "A Lover" and "The Trick of Change"; to Miss Elsie G. Marsh, of the library of the Connecticut Agricultural College, for many services in connection with securing necessary books through the inter-library loan; and to the library of my own University,—as well as to those of Yale and Michigan, in particular,—for the supplying of books and periodicals without which my work could not have been completed. Nor must the aid of my wife in preparing copy pass unrecorded.

I must also take this opportunity to remark, in common fairness to my intentions, that my plans to work on Mr. Coppard had been approved before I had learned of the proposed publication of Mr. Schwartz's *Bibliography*, which book, despite a few errors and some incompleteness, has saved me much work and proved itself very useful generally. Other works, of one sort or

another, which have proved useful in the present connection are listed in my *Bibliography*, to which constant reference is made in my footnotes; I should say, however, that of the very many reviews of Mr. Coppard's prose which I have read, only such as are specifically referred to or drawn on for quotation are there listed. Incidentally, I have not thought it necessary to label every passing reference to literature, on the assumption that my own meagre knowledge will impose no strain on my readers.

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² Some of which I have not personally seen.

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I: BIOGRAPHY¹

A

Walkers on the South Downs of England must often, of late years, have seen a bronzed fellow-wanderer (obviously a "very healthy, sympathetic and human type of man") with "dark hair and brown eyes," tramping "with a rucksack and what he himself calls a 'funny' hat," and probably wearing "a bright tie and a saffron shirt;"² few of these have perhaps recognized in the solitary the poet and teller of tales Alfred Edgar Coppard.

Mr. Coppard—who has been described (I think not too accurately!) as looking "remarkably like Senator W. B. Yeats as a young man, though . . . [he] is said to get his dark good looks and literary fire from gipsy, not from Irish, descent"³—was born 4 January, 1878, at the ancient watering-place of Folkestone, Kent, the oldest child (there were three sisters) of George and Emily Alma (Southwell) Coppard. His family was without either literary or general artistic traditions; his father was a tailor, his mother a housemaid; his paternal grandfather seems to have been a gardener, his maternal grandfather "an ostler," though he says, "I never knew any grandparents," affirming that his family "has no history" beyond that of his parents, and asserting a complete ignorance of his racial roots.

The future author, who disclaims any memory of significant boyhood experiences (that is, presumably, other than those reflected in his work), lived at Folkestone until he was five, when he entered the Lewes Road Board School,⁴ Fairlight Place, Brighton, where he remained until he was nine, at which time his father died, preceding his mother by almost forty years. In *The Hundredth Story* . . ., which reflects in some degree his

¹ Unassigned quotations are from personal letters written by Mr. Coppard in answer to my questions; common honesty has prevented me from editing these quotations in any fashion, even where they are most pleasantly casual in disregard of formal "English".

² Quotations from "Novelist as an Errand Boy", *cit.*; cf. *Queenslander* art., *cit.*

³ From an unassigned anonymous clipping that has reached me.

⁴ *Who's Who*, 1931.

childhood at Folkestone and Brighton, he says, "My earliest recollections are concerned with a sense of endless sunshine . . . & my mother beautiful as an angel . . . There was also a tall ship in a harbour, and a tiny man aloft in the crosstrees . . . And there was Sugarloaf Hill, on whose top I knelt and worshipped God because I dared not look up into His sky." The same work says that his father, "a tailor with a reverence for his art," "much resembled God" and "had a thick chestnut beard;" an interview reveals further sidelights:

"My father used to tell us stories. He told us all the Shakespearean stories. He didn't read from Shakespeare because we were too poor to buy books. Then one night he came home quite drunk with a complete Shakespeare for two shillings. After that, he used to read me to death. In those days I read Shakespeare myself only for the story, skipping all the songs! My father was a wonderful fellow . . . I do regret not having known more about him. He used to take me into the woods for long jaunts, mushrooming, with me on his shoulders. He used to collect birds. He grows on me more and more as a personality."⁵

—Mrs. Coppard, meanwhile (as one gathers), seems to have taken her son regularly of a Sunday evening "to an undenominational chapel run by some hooded sisters and a preacher with gaunt eyes who sometimes preached himself into a fit."⁶

About the age of nine, young Coppard appears to have worked (until discharged) as "an assistant to an itinerant vendor of paraffin oil"⁷ at "sixpence a day."⁸ At nine, too, "he was taken away from school because of ill-health—to cure which, save the mark, he was set to work! Hardship and toil prevented a return to school, so that the education of this writer has been practically self-acquired."⁹

⁵ Morgan, Louise, *op. cit.*, p. 793.

⁶ "The Presser."

⁷ *Voices*, no. *cit.*, p. 163; cf. *Golden Book*, no. *cit.*

⁸ *The Hundredth Story*.

⁹ Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 268.—The *Queenslander* article (*cit.*)—furnished me by Mr. Coppard and, therefore, presumably accurate—also says, "Ill health . . . dogged his footsteps for many years;" and the *T. P.'s & Cassell's Weekly* article (noted above, and similarly supplied me) remarks, "he had been too delicate to attend school." At the same time, Mr. Coppard tells me he's had no serious illnesses.—Cf. also my remarks on "The Presser", below. (*Time and Tide*, *cit.*, p. 595, says: "His early illness left him with no weak spots . . .")

Specifically, the lad was apprenticed "to a Jewish tailor in Whitechapel": "He worked from 7 a. m. till 8 p. m. . . . His small earnings were handed over in full to the aunt with whom he lodged."¹⁰ The shadow of those days may be traced in some degree from his tale "The Presser", which pictures him¹¹ as "a pale boy of pinched appearance—for although his black coat was a size too large for him, his black trousers were a size too small—he was not very well, and he was tired." One gathers, further, that his uncle was "'an engine-driver'" living "'at Hackney,'" and that he was often a very hungry boy—as the following extract makes clear:

" . . . at the end of the day the kind Mr. Alabaster¹² would sometimes give him a penny to ride part of the way home in a tram. With his penny Johnny hurried off to buy a cake or a pie, and thereafter walked cheerfully home. Often that penny became such a mighty necessity to him that as he knelt alone among the rags in the gloomy room, the pose, the quiet, and the need induced a mood in which he mumbled dozens of prayers.

"'O God, make him give me a penny to-night, only a penny; make him give me a penny, please God. Amen.'

"As if to impregnate his plea with suitable flavour, he crooned over the hymns he knew. Then again:

"'Please God, make him give me a penny. Please this once, like you did before, and I won't ask again. Amen.'

"Not often were these prayers answered, and directly their failure became apparent he would descend weakly to the street, his whole body burning with ferocity against so frightful, so callous, so unseeing a god; and he would gasp out horrible blasphemies, until he came to a shop window where he could pause for a long rest, divide up its delicacies, and mystically devour them. In such delight he always forgot his anger against Jehovah."

According to "The Presser", "Mrs. Flynn" called her son home at the end of a year; actually, Mr. Coppard's residence at

¹⁰ Quotations from "Novelist as an Errand Boy", *cit.*; for a picture of the boy and his mother, *cf.* the tales "The Cherry Tree" and "Pomona's Babe".

¹¹ Mr. Coppard introduces himself into his tales as "Johnny Flynn".

¹² The tailor.

Old Ford during this London period lasted three years, the last two of which were spent clerking "in the office of an international press agent."¹³ Thereafter, perhaps led by homesickness, the lad returned to live with his mother at Brighton, in which city he remained for the following sixteen years. If one may accept literally the testimony of his own "Pomona's Babe" and *Hundredth Story*, he was in the adolescent portion of these years "a pale mild creature"¹⁴ with "a queasy mind,"¹⁵ skeptical, and "terrified by ugliness or vulgarity;"¹⁶ a boy who was the argumentative delight of his hard-working, emotional, tempestuous, imaginative, "stout"-loving mother (always able to quash delicately, by casual remarks, his interest in various girls), and a boy who, incidentally, loved cheese.— ". . . he was thin and not tall, his dark hair was scattered; his white face was a nice face, thought Mrs. Flynn, very nice, only there was always something strange about his clothes. She couldn't help that now, but he had such queer fancies; there was no other boy in the street whose trousers were so baggy or of such a colour. His starched collars were all right, of course, beautifully white and shiny—she got them up herself—and they set his neck off nicely."¹⁷ Reading was his great interest even in those days;¹⁸ in his own words, "I just liked reading, anything. I can remember my father buying a Shakespear and I soon liked Dickens. Otherwise it was the 'Deadwood Dick' saga that I read most assiduously."

Numerous occupations followed his return to Brighton. From twelve to fourteen he was "a messenger for Reuter's Telegraph Agency in Old Jewry,"¹⁹ and eventually he became "office boy to a carrier and a grocer." *The Hundredth Story* . . . suggests that at sixteen he discovered "a fondness and aptitude for running" (after which there followed "Fluid tender

¹³ "Novelist as an Errand Boy" and *Queenslander* art., *cit.*

¹⁴ "Pomona's Babe."

¹⁵ *The Hundredth Story*. . .

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ "Pomona's Babe."

¹⁸ "Pertinax" says (*Bookseller and Collector*, 24 Apr., 1930, *cit.*, p. 558), "the real reading began after the war had started."

¹⁹ *Biblio.*, *cit.*, p. 7.

hours" running and dreaming on the South Downs); that meanwhile his love of pictures and books continued to develop; and that when, at eighteen, he bought a "Penny Poet" because it contained *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, a passion for poetry and the writing of poetry flared up, to haunt him day and night, whereupon he proceeded to read "the whole of Johnson's Poets."²⁰

Between twenty and thirty he occasionally ran as a professional sprinter,²¹ "particularly in Chatham and London, as well as the Sunday morning meetings at Tom Connor's Old Bow Running Grounds,"²² always using any prize-money he might win to buy books. Mr. Coppard, who collects first editions, says he got in those days *Poems of the Past and Present* and "J. W. Mackail's translation of the first eight books of *The Odyssey*. I also bought"—he continues—"Songs of Childhood, by Walter Ramal, but my sister stole it and gave it to a barber she was fond of. I got, too, that Christmas number of *The Pall Mall Magazine* which contained De la Mare's first poems, but many years later I fatally lent it to Richard Hughes—I suppose it got blown away during that high wind in Jamaica."²³—But to return to chronology.

For "about five years" previous to 1907 Mr. Coppard served, successively, as clerk and costkeeper "with the Reason Manufacturing Company of Brighton (Electricians)," during which period he married at Brighton (29 July, 1905) Lily Anne Richardson, "an experienced typist,"²⁴ whose first novel, *Orange Court* (1929), was none too cordially received by the reviewers a few years ago, and to whom he dedicated his first volume, *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*.

²⁰ "Novelist as an Errand Boy," *cit.*

²¹ *Voices*, no. *cit.*, p. 163, calls him also "a long-distance walker, and a trainer of runners, boxers, and swimmers"; "Novelist as an Errand Boy", *cit.*, says, "All through his youth he was a sportsman, being a swimmer, long distance walker, amateur runner (running races for silver watches) and professional runner. He organised athletic clubs and bred whippets."—Cf. also O'Brien, *Best British Short Stories of 1926*, *cit.*, and Mr. Coppard's tale "The Third Prize".

²² *Biblio.*, *cit.*, p. 7.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ "New Oxford Author," *cit.*

He moved to Burgess Hill, Sussex, in the year of his marriage, and informs me that he remained here until he went to work, in January, 1907, at "the Eagle Ironworks in Oxford," where he became chief accountant, remaining until 1 April, 1919, when he threw over an assured future as a clerk to give himself wholly to writing. (During the war he worked in a munitions factory at Oxford.) He says that he "thoroughly enjoyed"²⁵ his work as a clerk, and earned "good money."²⁶ Meanwhile, his residences were varied: After an initial two years at Ifley (Oxford), he spent three at Islip (Oxford), two at Oxford, one at Coombe (Oxford), two more at Oxford, three at Stanton St. John (Oxford), one at Chinnov (Oxford), and six near Fingest, at "an eerie spot in the midst of great woods"²⁷ (six miles from Henley), in a small cottage built thirty years earlier for a gardener, and subsequently used by gipsies²⁸—a cottage whose charming location amid beeches, Scotch pines, "blue spruce firs," and—in July—pink rose-bay has been described by Miss Louise Morgan;²⁹ since 1928 he has been living at Long Wittenham, Abingdon, Berkshire, though he apparently still resorts to his Chiltern cottage.³⁰

Of his clerical days at Oxford, and his association with some of the literary students of the University, Mr. Coppard has given two delightful reminiscences.³¹ Miss Morgan quotes him as follows:³²

"I fell in with a number of literary students . . . I was always falling in with the literary ones. All of these lads had

²⁵ Morgan, Louise, *op. cit.*, p. 794.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 793.

²⁷ Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 268. Chapman adds, "it was a period of deep thinking and of meagre living"; the *Queenslander* article, *cit.*, refers to Mr. Coppard's living "chiefly on vegetables, because they are cheap."—The precise address was Little Poynants, Kimble Wood, Skirmett, Henley-on-Thames.—*Cf.* the tale "Luxury"?

²⁸ "Novelist as an Errand Boy," *cit.*

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 794.

³⁰ See Miss Morgan's article.—The mad—and changing—color-schemes preferred by Mr. Coppard for this cottage suggest that of Teague's caravan in "The Man from the Caravan"!

³¹ *Cf.*, incidentally, the tale entitled "The Ballet Girl", which deals with the antics of some university students and the confusions of one Simpkins.

³² *Op. cit.*, pp. 793-4.

something published in magazines or journals. It irritated me. I thought 'I can do better than that,' so I began to write things myself. I wonder whether there's a group like that now at Oxford? There was Aldous Huxley, and 'Tommy' Earp, Louis Golding, Alan Porter, John Goss the singer, L. A. G. Strong, Henry Harwood, and Richard Hughes. I used to meet Yeats occasionally. Once I remember we agreed that Elizabethan plays should be read in low pubs to get the proper atmosphere. Sixteen of us one night were reading *The White Devil* and having a great time, when in came the proctor with his two bullies behind him. He turned first to Alan Porter and said 'Good evening, sir, are you a member of this University?' 'Yes'. 'Will you please say who you are, sir?' 'I am Alan Porter of Queen's College.' 'Mr. Porter of Queen's, will you please attend the Proctors' Court to-morrow at 9.45?' Then he turned to the next one and said exactly the same words. He went through the ceremony perfectly solemnly, and without missing a word, fifteen times. It was terribly funny. I've never forgotten it. Then he turned to me. I was the last one. 'Good evening, sir, are you a member of this University?' 'No,' said I. They were in a funk about what would happen to them, but as a matter of fact Yeats intervened, and they were let off rather lightly."

In his amusing "Foreword" to Mr. L. A. G. Strong's *The Big Man*,³³ Mr. Coppard also tells of his experiences with the Oxford boys, who were curiously devoted to cinemas ("where Aldous Huxley always used opera glasses") and to Dowson's verse ("despite my onslaughts"), as they were united in admiration of "Lags" Strong:

"There was . . . a playreading set informally created by Roy Campbell,³⁴ Richard Hughes, Aldous Huxley, and Wilfrid Childe, and we foregathered in a pub, a really low pub, to read *The White Devil* or *The Way of the World* until it was raided by proctors. After that we got hold of an extremely vacant room at the top of some premises occupied by an assembly called the Hypocrites' Club, a club which, after setting the seal on its

³³ Edn. cit.

³⁴ Whose *Flaming Terrapin* Mr. Coppard praises highly in "The Ark Afloat", *Saturday Review*, 16 August, 1924.

tradition by electing me an honorary member for life, became fatally extinct. The only upholstery in our room was an empty beer barrel; there was neither chair, carpet, table, ornament nor looking-glass, and we sat around on the floor with our backs against the wall intoning deathless verse. Each reader brought a cushion, a candle, a copy of the play, and a supper offering. The cushion was to sit on, the candle was lit and stuck on the floor beside you, and these ideally lacerating conditions were sometimes shared—quite blissfully, I am sure—by W. B. Yeats, a wonderful visitor, though he never read entirely to my satisfaction. At half time a bowl of punch would be invented by Richard Hughes, a remarkably handy fellow, and you supped on a spoonful of mayonnaise, a block of toffee, or calmly invited death with anchovies and chestnuts. But the society was soon shockingly assailed by hordes of terrific fleas that were consorting in the walls and floor, and we were driven out and we were driven mad, so mad that the society perished.”

The atmosphere of Oxford at least did not discourage Mr. Coppard's own attempts at creation; he began writing “poems and tales somewhere about 1911,” and his first publication, “Communion”, appeared in *The Varsity* for 31 May, 1916. *The Egoist* printed two of his poems (“The Lock” and “The Oracle”) in its issue for June, 1917; *Pearson's Magazine* for July, 1918, contained “Piffingcap”—the first literary work for which he received payment. A few more pieces placed in the periodicals during 1918 (*The English Review* published “Dusky Ruth” in November) encouraged him to give up his clerical work and begin life as a professional writer. In his own words, “I took a cottage in the country, lived sparsely, and hawked my first collection of tales, *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*, around the publishers.”³⁵ The work was variously declined, though its author received the encouragement of Mr. Austin Harrison and certain other editors; consequently, Mr. Coppard's net income from writing for the first twenty-one months after leaving his job

³⁵ Quotations in this paragraph from *Biblio., cit.*, p. 1.—Cf. “On Turning Author” (*Lond. Star*, 29 May, 1928)—an article not seen by me?

amounted to only £97. He has written graphically of these days in the *Bibliography*.³⁶

"Early in 1921 I was as near destitution as makes no odds, having less than a pound to my name, with no credit and faint hope of any revenue. At that time I was living near Oxford, healthy and happy, on cheap fruit and raw vegetables . . . It seemed incredible to me that I should have to starve, but the alternative was beyond all credence. It took the form of a letter one morning from 'The Metropolitan' of America, enclosing a cheque paid in advance for a tale . . . called *The Tiger*."—One can scarcely blame him for being so excited over the £50 thus received as to buy himself a watch!

Adam and Eve and Pinch Me was finally published 1 April, 1921, as the first venture of Harold Midgley Taylor's *Golden Cockerel Press* (since 1924 in the hands of Mr. Robert Gibbings), with which Mr. Coppard has been associated, since its inception, "in the capacity of literary and financial adviser . . . principally the latter." Mr. Chapman recalls³⁷ that "even the author shared in the labour of printing and binding" this little volume of twelve tales. But the book was well received by both the reviewers and the general public, and even the first American edition of 350 copies went quickly, though the second was less successful.³⁸

In 1922 the *Golden Cockerel Press* issued *Clorinda Walks in Heaven*, a collection of nine tales (presumably dedicated to Mr. Coppard's mother, "Mrs. Flynn"), and *Hips and Haws*, the author's first volume of verse. *Clorinda*, like its predecessor, proved highly acceptable to most of the reviewers, though the London *Sunday Times*³⁹ and *Daily Telegraph* condemned it. Incidentally, it is interesting to notice that at least four reviews recognize the Irish influence at work in Mr. Coppard: the *Saturday Review* (which speaks accurately of the "interfusing of a

³⁶ Pp. 20–1.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 267.

³⁸ For details, cf. *Biblio., cit.*—Available copies of the first English edn. are very scarce; the late Harold Taylor's copy, presented by Mr. Coppard, was quoted in 1930 at \$125. [*Bookseller and Collector (cit.)*, 19 June, 1930.]

³⁹ Cf. §V of my *Biblio.* for all reviews of the prose here and hereinafter referred to.

faery glamour with an earthy grotesque crudity") says the "humour and fantasy have relation to the work of James Stephens;" the *Observer* sees a "Yeats-like touch" in "The Elixir of Youth", though this tale suggests Synge to the *Freeman's Journal*, as it points "the Irish manner" for the *Spectator*. (*The Outlook* and some others note resemblances to Tchekhov.)—Unfortunately, this volume, of which there was a special signed edition of twenty copies, sold badly at first; it was eventually taken over by the firm of Jonathan Cape.

Hips and Haws contained twenty-seven pieces, of which "A Carol for Margaret Chester" stands for me as the most notable. The trade edition (there was also a special one, signed and numbered, of twenty copies) was unattractively bound in yellow boards, with the poems set in miserably small type; of its 480 copies (all numbered), Jonathan Cape took over fifty-four, again despite the fact that the reviewers had been fairly cordial to this, the seventh, venture of the *Golden Cockerel Press*.⁴⁰

Both public and reviewers (allowing for a few recalcitrant ones) were kind to Mr. Coppard's next volume, *The Black Dog*,⁴¹ a collection of eighteen tales published by Cape in 1923, and still one of the most popular numbers in this firm's admirable "Travellers' Library"; a particular favorite of mine partly because it was the first of its author's books to come to my attention, it contains some of Mr. Coppard's richest and most moving work, and fully deserves the high tribute paid it, in the *Saturday Review*, by Mr. Gerald Gould. Its successor, *Fishmonger's Fiddle*, which was published by Cape in 1925,⁴² and of which there was a special signed edition of sixty copies, drew some high praise in England,⁴³ but rather mixed reactions in America. Whereas the *Saturday Review* called the author "clever without being bored . . . in the best sense, a realist: that is to say, he takes account of all

⁴⁰ Dated 15 Mar., and containing some sorry misprints; cf. *Appendix B*.

⁴¹ Now also an extreme rarity among collectors of first editions; Mr. Coppard himself lacks a "first". [*Bookseller and Collector* (*cit.*), 19 June, 1930.]

⁴² In which year Mr. Coppard also issued through the *Golden Cockerel Press* a selection of *Songs from Robert Burns* (with a preface), contributed an introduction to Mr. Bercovici's *Between Earth and Sky*, and had an article on Mr. David Garnett in Mr. Knopf's *Borzoi Book*.

⁴³ Cf. especially *Daily News*, *Manchester Guardian*, *London Times Literary Supplement*, and *Saturday Review*.

the facts, including the fact of romance, and faithfully records them," the *Dial* remarked, "Mr. Coppard has a slippery and accomplished intelligence which comes to rest too easily on the surface things of life," and *Books*, charging verbosity, asserted, "As you read you neither like nor dislike."—Incidentally, it may be noted that the English reviewers in general singled out "The Higglers"⁴⁴ as that tale of the seventeen in this volume deserving of particular praise.

American reviewers seem in general to have been more favorable to Mr. Coppard's next collection of tales, *The Field of Mustard* (Cape, 1926), which was widely noticed, Miss Gladys Graham remarking beautifully (though perhaps with the marvelous opening tale mainly in mind) that the characters were "all earth-haunted;"⁴⁵ the English reviewers whose discussions I was able to examine (and I think I saw most of the important ones) assumed either a favorable or a doubtfully favorable attitude. This book, which Mr. Coppard has called his "best,"⁴⁶ and of which a special signed edition of eighty-five copies was issued, includes among its eleven tales "The Funnel", listed (and how strangely, when "The Field of Mustard" itself was available!) by Mr. John Cournos among "The Fifteen Finest Short Stories."⁴⁷

In 1926 Mr. Coppard also published *Pelagea and Other Poems*,⁴⁸ issued by the *Golden Cockerel Press* in a beautiful edition of 425 numbered copies, illustrated with wood-engravings by Mr. Robert Gibbings, and in general favorably noticed by the reviewers. This volume, which in every way marks an immense stride forward in Mr. Coppard's poetic career, was followed (1926) by *Yokohama Garland and Other Poems*, for the most part a reprint of its author's two earlier collections of verse—a large, expensive volume prepared by the Pynson Printers for the

⁴⁴ Cf. *Biblio.*, pp. 57-8, anent pirated edn.

⁴⁵ *Saturday Review of Literature*, *cit.*; cf. also Mr. Ford's review, partially quoted in Chapter III, below.

⁴⁶ *Biblio.*, *cit.*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ *T. P.'s & Cassell's Weekly*, *cit.*

⁴⁸ "Pelagea" should be pronounced "Pelageya", "with the guttural hard": Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 268.—This volume, which contains twenty-four poems, was completed 15 Sept., 1926.—Cf. *Appendix C*.

Centaur Press, of Philadelphia, illustrated with vignettes by Mr. Wharton Esherick, and limited to 500 numbered copies signed by both artist and author. Forty-seven titles were included in this collection, reviews of which seem to have been few in number, though favorable in tone.—This same year (1926) Mr. Coppard spent "three or four months in Vienna [as a result of which we have "Silver Circus", *Count Stefan*, and "Rifki"] . . . and a week in Venice;" he says he had previously spent "A fortnight in Italy at Christmas when about 44 (Santa Margharita)."

The year 1928 was a notable one in his career. *Count Stefan*, that lovely and amusing tale of excitements in the "Wiener Wald", appeared 16 February in a charming *Golden Cockerel* edition of 600 numbered copies, with illustrations and a wood-engraving of the author in left profile by Mr. Robert Gibbings.⁴⁹ It was followed by *Silver Circus*, a collection of sixteen tales (including some early and some rather trivial material) fairly well received by the English reviewers (though the *London Times Literary Supplement* was less enthusiastic than usual), but provocative of rather mixed reactions in America. More important than this volume (which also appeared in a special edition of 125 signed and numbered copies) was *Collected Poems*, like *Silver Circus* issued by Cape in 1928, and containing sixty-five pieces introduced by a characteristically engaging "Advertisement". This volume, which "in especial has been the subject of a number of forged autographs,"⁵⁰ stirred highly mixed (sometimes almost violent!) responses on the part of the reviewers, whose comments will be given some attention in my next chapter; meanwhile it will be sufficient to say that while the English, Irish, and Scotch reviews seldom give really whole-hearted endorsement, there is expressed no irritation with the "Advertisement"⁵¹ such as in some cases colors the American reviews (which are preponderantly unfavorable or lukewarm). The sale of the book has been especially disappointing in America:

⁴⁹ And an error on p. 53: ". . . and with blooms of which nobody seem to know the names."

⁵⁰ *Biblio., cit.*, p. 52.

⁵¹ Cf. *Appendix C*.—My bibliography lists the reviews; *Appendix B: 1* gives a collation of texts, and *B: 2* indicates certain differences between the English and American editions of *Coll. Poems*.

Mr. Knopf, publisher of the American edition, volunteers⁵² the information that from the date of publication in the fall of 1928 to the end of August, 1931, only 491 copies were sold.

In 1929 *The Gollan* (which appeared in *Everyman*, 26 December) saw private printing in a Christmas edition of seventy-five copies "for the Friends of Earl and Florence Fisk," and "'Wilt Thou Leave Me Thus?'" was contributed to *The Legion Book*.⁵³ In 1930 appeared *The Man from Kilsheelan* in a revised and limited edition⁵⁴ (550 copies; 500 for sale) signed by the author, who also contributed a "Foreword" saying the tale was a favorite of his, defending his use of "a sort of Anglo-Irish idiom," expressing his healthy dislike of purists and precisionists, remarking that "formulae are despicable things," and confessing, "Stephen Crane thought it dishonest to touch a story once it had been offered to the public, but no such qualms have ever perturbed me. I would like to rewrite periodically almost all I have written, for a writer's desire must always be perfection—and perfection is not in him."

The same year (1930) saw the inclusion of Mr. Coppard's somewhat cynical "confessions" in *The Georgian Confession Book*,⁵⁵ the appearance of which had been preceded by that of *Pink Furniture/ A Tale for Lovely Children with Noble Natures*,⁵⁶ of which there was also printed a signed and limited edition of 260 copies (250 for sale), and which Mr. Coppard whimsically says "originated in a bathroom."⁵⁷ This curious tale of Toby Tottel's adventures searching about a crazy world for pink furniture and *Open and Ask Me*, "The Book of Wisdom," looks like a strange mixture of satire, parody, grotesquerie, fairy lore, and several other things; almost as good as anything in it (and certainly better than the illustrations by Miss Nancy Bankart Gurney!) is the prefatory "Author's Note": "Some of the characters in this book are almost fictitious, but most are merely true. If any one wants the law of me for this, I should not care

⁵² In a letter dated 31 Aug., 1931.

⁵³ Cf. my biblio. of "Prose Fiction."

⁵⁴ "Furnival Books," *cit.*; woodcut by Mr. Gibbings.

⁵⁵ Compiled by Fabes; *cit.*

⁵⁶ Cape.—Cf. *Biblio.*, *cit.*, p. 40.

⁵⁷ *Biblio.*, *cit.*, p. 40.

to go to prison as I do not think I could put up with it."—Nevertheless, the book seems to have won a fair amount of approval. It was followed in 1931 by *The Hundredth Story of A. E. Coppard*, issued in a numbered edition of 1000 copies (with wood-engravings by Mr. Gibbings) by the *Golden Cockerel Press*, and over-subscribed before it was even written; by the appearance of Mr. Schwartz's bibliography of *The Writings of Alfred Edgar Coppard*, with notes and a foreword by Mr. Coppard, who also signed each of the 650 copies printed, of which 600 were announced as "for sale"; and by the appearance of Mr. L. A. G. Strong's *The Big Man*,⁵⁸ with an introduction by Mr. Coppard. In this year the author also spent three months in Italy "at Deano Marina."⁵⁹

B

To theorize about the real nature, the essential character, of the man whose publications I have been listing would be, to say the least, thoroughly impertinent, yet some comment seems required by the nature of my task. My own surmises are confirmed by some conversational remarks made by Mr. Edward Davison (he will forgive this reference), who pictured Mr. Coppard as that rare type of individual able to stroll into a country inn and within twenty minutes to have all the other guests laughingly at his feet. One knows that he couldn't possibly be a tiresomely "bookish" person; one can readily picture him playing "'shove ha' penny' and 'darts'" at "the local inn."⁶⁰ It is said that he "prefers the town," "is fond of the theatre," and "is deeply interested in folk songs and dances, anthropology, comparative religion and socialism;" as well as that he "once remarked, half-whimsically, that his ideal mode of life would be

⁵⁸ Edn. *cit.*—There has also just appeared (Cape, 1931) a new collection of Mr. Coppard's tales (ten) entitled *Nixey's Harlequin*, as well as a Coppard "omnibus," *Fares, Please!* (Cape), containing *The Black Dog*, *The Field of Mustard*, and *Silver Circus*; and a new poem, *Easter Day*, is announced, this to be issued in a signed and limited edition of 145 copies.

⁵⁹ Cf. "Dark Knowledge", remembering also "A Wildgoose Chase"?

⁶⁰ "Novelist as an Errand Boy", *cit.* He used to be good at billiards, too. (*Time and Tide, cit.*)

a wealthy gentleman's, of the Forsyte school."⁶¹ He tells me he is "a socialist and materialist, with consequently an instinctive dislike of parsons and police—to say nothing of militarism;" that he has "no solution of the social and economic problem;" and that his "objection to the religious element is its enormous cost of doing nothing"—as well as "its constitutional silliness." He lists his mature interests as cricket, football, running, reading poetry, and taking solitary walks; he says he has made "Several walking tours in Ireland and scores . . . in England."⁶² For the rest, he writes humorously of the plague of autograph-hunters, having decided, "It is evident that my signature, inscription, information, or opinion, has been a profit to anyone except myself, but my cupidity is now dangerously aroused and in future I propose to suck the blood of all persons requiring this unearned increment of me;"⁶³ and he makes some cynical confessions in the *Confession Book* already alluded to, listing "impecuniosity" as his "worst fault," his "life's greatest sorrow experienced," his "life's greatest sorrow feared," and the "fault" he dislikes most in others. He also names "patience" his "best virtue;" labels a "money box" both "the best" and "the worst invention;" indicates "Tidiness" as the virtue he admires most in others; registers a desire for "Better brains and less belly," as well as the universal "Abolition of work;" calls Abraham Lincoln and Gabriel Oak his favorite heroes in "real life" and "fiction," respectively; says that his "life's greatest pleasure" is "Writing a poem," as his "life's greatest pleasure anticipated" is "Getting paid for it;" admits that his favorite "motto or phrase" is "In vain the counsels of the wise and the tongue's boast; he is most blest to whom from day to day no evil happens," while his "ideal" is "To do unto others what ought to have been done to them long ago;" and catalogues soccer, Tchekov, Schubert's *Lindenbaum*, *The Ring* and *the Book*, *A*

⁶¹ *Time and Tide*, *cit.*, p. 595.

⁶² South Downs, Cotswolds (where, according to "Dusky Ruth", "though the towns are small and sweet and the inns snug, the general habit of the land is bleak and bare"), Derbyshire, Quantocks, etc.—*Cf.* "Mr. Lightfoot in the Green Isle", "The Post Office and the Serpent", etc.

⁶³ *Biblio.*, *cit.*, p. 6.

Sentimental Journey, gold, the cowslip, and "Apples and beer" as his "favourite" recreation, author, song, poem, book, color, flower, and "food and drink," respectively.

One frequently wonders, indeed, if he isn't sardonic because "the old creeds" have "betrayed him," as they betrayed Lassen in "Dark Knowledge." *The Hundredth Story* . . . , which reveals, by confession, the author's essential nature, despite its imaginary episodes with women, suggests capriciousness and a cynical half-doubt of almost everything (especially emotion), but contains these surprising sentences: "I suppose I have lied about myself, even here, about my real character—it is difficult to know. I have said things I would like to be true. . . . The mirror we hold up to ourselves deceives us from childhood."—Yet the man who emerges from Mr. Coppard's books remains a thoroughly likeable compound of imagination, capriciousness, tolerance, humor, sympathy, quizzicality, and almost belligerent naturalness—with a dash of frank egotism and a hatred of sham and injustice: a man whose "human kindness" and "keen wit and humor" have naturally not escaped approbation.⁶⁴ And that man (who, incidentally, has done some broadcasting, and whose first editions—as everyone knows—are "collectors' items") has seen his work widely anthologized and already partially translated into Swedish and German,⁶⁵ and himself characterized (though in "derogatory" fashion!⁶⁶) in the fiction of others, as well as recognized as one of the leading authors of his day.

—Which brings me to a concluding note on his way of working, his prejudices and critical theories, and his activities as a reviewer. I begin with the last.

C

I

Since 1919 Mr. Coppard has done a good deal of reviewing

⁶⁴ Quotations from first *Bookseller and Collector* article (*cit.*), where one also reads: "Looking at that sensitive face, with almost Rossetti luxuriance of hair above it, watching the eyes that are beyond the horizon, marking the Grecian mouth and nose—all poised in unison—there is no difficulty for us to recognize in A. E. Coppard the poet" (p. 557).

⁶⁵ *Cf. Biblio., cit.*, pp. 62 ff.

⁶⁶ *Cf., ibid.*, p. 73.

for the *Manchester Guardian* (an early friend), the *Spectator*, and the *Saturday Review*. Specimens of his reviews that I have examined⁶⁷ do not suggest that he is another Coleridge, Lamb, or Symonds so far as critical ability is concerned; there seems little in the way of revelatory insight, but there is a personal forthrightness (sometimes almost youthfully assured!) that relies on common sense (convenient intangibility!) and certain fundamental concepts anent the folk tale and the language of poetry—not to mention a salty prejudice as respecting his opinions of Donne and a few others.

Thus, in a review of Mr. Bullett's *Street of the Eye*,⁶⁸ he suggests that the "greater" short story writers use an "objective" method of treatment; and in the correspondence resulting, he says, "The objective method of writing is that by which the characters themselves direct the whole progress of the story. Their psychology, with the least possible intrusion by the author, is revealed directly by their own words and actions, and the things they are permitted to observe. The subjective is naturally the contrary method; you learn principally not so much by seeing the tale enacted before you, as by the narration of the author . . ."⁶⁹ And he names Hardy as a practitioner of the "objective," Conrad of the "subjective," method.⁷⁰

Again, one finds him saying,⁷¹ ". . . all poetry is rhetoric of some kind; it is a roundabout sweet way of saying things which could be expressed in more succinct and simple forms. But it has this virtue: it heightens our sense of the thing conveyed and excites an emotion that we share with the poet and his protagonists. Whether that heightened sense is a true sense, or whether the emotion is illusion, need not detain us; we are concerned only with the propriety of language."—Most of which, I think, suggests the dogmatic rather than the considered, and consequently requires no comment.

⁶⁷ Cf. my biblio.

⁶⁸ *Spectator*, 29 Dec., 1923.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 9 Feb., 1924.

⁷⁰ In view of these rather individual conceptions of the "objective" and "subjective" methods, it is a trifle amusing to find the *Spectator* itself saying, in its review of *Clorinda*, "Indeed, were we seeking for 'influences', we might find in the *Broadsheet Ballad* that of the author of *Tess*, though the manner of its telling is rather Conrad's."

⁷¹ "Mr. Masfield Collected," *cit.*

For the rest, one finds in Mr. Coppard's miscellaneous reviews a good deal in the way of interesting comment or characterization. Thus, Emily Dickinson is called "a Transcendentalist with a dulcimer;"⁷² Whitman's "Once I Passed through a Populous City" is regarded as "that most tender of love poems;"⁷³ Mr. Edgar Lee Masters' muse is labelled "Euterpe with a club foot;"⁷⁴ a neat distinction between comedy and farce is made by pointing out that in the first instance the author plays "to a situation," in the second "to the gallery;"⁷⁵ of Katherine Mansfield it is said, "Outside of Dickens no one ever so transmuted high spirits into literature;"⁷⁶ and a review of *Main Street* informs us that "real literary style is an art that at present simply will not grow in America!"⁷⁷

At least one of Mr. Coppard's reviews had amusing consequences—the sarcastic and justly devastating one of Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell's *The Thirteenth Caesar*, in the *Saturday Review* for 15 November, 1924, which was sarcastically questioned by Mr. Osbert Sitwell in a letter to the editor printed in the issue of 6 December. Mr. Coppard replied, also sarcastically, in a letter to the editor published 13 December, and concluding, "For my 'manners' I am truly sorry if they offend, but there is one rule I have always accepted as golden, i. e., to take my gruel like a sportsman. But do you not think, sir, it would make amends if you sent the next book I publish to Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell for review? I promise not to complain of the outcome." Mr. Osbert Sitwell answered Mr. Coppard (calling him "the Baldwin of poetry-reviewing") in the issue of 10 January, 1925, declining this invitation for his brother—only to receive (in the issue of 17 January) another effectively sarcastic retort from Mr. Coppard, a retort followed by a dry editorial note: "This correspondence is closed"!

⁷² *Saturday Review*, 4 Apr., 1925.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 27 Dec., 1924.

⁷⁴ *Voices*, Nov., 1920.

⁷⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Oct., 1921.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 12 Sept., 1924.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 Apr., 1921: Was Mr. Coppard deliberately writing with the date of publication in mind? (1 Apr. has played a large hand in his own career!)

2

Anent Mr. Coppard's way of working, his prejudices, and his critical theories (aside from the few already suggested), one may say the following with assurance: He is a man who works slowly and deliberately. "For him, as he once told us, the writing of a short story is a sort of wrestling match to get it out."⁷⁸ He dislikes talking about work in progress, writes only when he feels like writing, considers (for himself) physical fitness the best stimulation to creative activity, writes much out of doors, keeps (and carries) notebooks in which he classifies data under appropriate headings and notes plots and ideas, insists on doing things in his own way (though unbothered by interruptions of his work), is extremely careful in his nature-references, and plans his tales "'To the last word,'" often writing "'the last few sentences first.'"⁷⁹ Incidentally, he tells me, "I believe in *order* and *effort*. I do not know what inspiration is. Of course it is necessary to be born with a *natural* talent of some sort."

His prejudices appear in his reactions to certain authors. He has been reported as an admirer of Chaucer, Browning, Burns, Henry James, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Yeats, Mr. George Moore, Mr. James Stephens, Jack London, Katherine Mansfield, Maupassant, and Tchekhov,⁸⁰ the last of whom he considers the significant possible influence "in his own writing."⁸¹ He admits a dislike of D. H. Lawrence (as he also disclaims any interest in symbolism and allegory),⁸² and furnishes me with the following information:

Favorite Poets: Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Browning, Burns, Herrick.

Favorite Writers: Sterne, Shaw.

Favorite Novelists: Dickens, Henry James, Hardy, Tolstoy, Turgeniev, Dostoieffsky.

⁷⁸ Second *Bookseller and Collector* article, *cit.*, p. 686.

⁷⁹ Quotations and information from Miss Morgan's article, *cit.*

⁸⁰ "Novelist as an Errand Boy", *cit.*—Cf. "Foreword" to *The Big Man* and Miss Morgan's article, both *cit.* *Time and Tide (cit.)* further suggests much interest in Milton, Whitman, *et al.*

⁸¹ *Queenslander* article, *cit.*

⁸² *Biblio., cit.*, pp. 24 and 28.—*Time and Tide (cit.)* registers his dislike also of Jane Austen and "Restoration Drama".

Favorite Short-Story Writers: Tchehov, De Maupassant, Hardy, James—"but especially Folk Tales."⁸³

"Pet Aversions": Donne,⁸⁴ Poe,⁸⁵ Thackeray.⁸⁶

For the rest, he believes the novel form has "'exhausted itself,'" and will find its popular appeal replaced by that of the motion picture (the "short sharp dramatic moments" of which will influence short-story writing⁸⁷). And he criticizes most modern short-story writers for approaching their medium "'as one would approach the novel,'"—through character individually interpreted, rather than through plot,—explaining, "'My theory of the difference between the technique of the novel and the short story is that the proper and only approach to the latter is by way of the folk tale'" (on which all his own tales are modelled), and stating that to him plot is "'a situation that has to be worked out,'" though "'it must be worked out with one rigid exclusion—death.'" Also, he dislikes substituting psychology for action in contemporary short stories.

Further significant opinions of his may be found in "The Craft of the Short Story,"⁸⁸ in which he avers that "the craft of fiction cannot be taught," and that in writing ". . . the first golden rule is that you must please yourself. The next golden rule is that it is very unlikely that anybody can teach you how to please yourself. The third golden rule is that if you can only please yourself by annoying the public you ought to be in gaol." Here also he points out that "The special qualities of the folk tale are its swiftness, its colour, its plot, its entire elimination of inessentials, its charming and significant repetitions, and its poetry. For the short story is to the general body of prose what the lyric is to poetry." And he wisely urges originality of idea,

⁸³ Though in his review of Mr. Bullett's *Street of the Eye* (*cit.*) he lists Tchehov, Maupassant, and Katherine Mansfield as the "greater artists" in the short story, emphasizing the "objective." (*Cf.* also *Spectator*, 8 Dec., 1923, pp. 902-3.)

⁸⁴ Attacked in his review of Mr. Fausset's *John Donne*, *cit.*

⁸⁵ *Cf.* ideas on death as a solution in fictional plots, Miss Morgan's article, *cit.*

⁸⁶ *Cf.* Teague's remarks anent Dickens and Thackeray in "The Man from the Caravan".

⁸⁷ "Novelist as an Errand Boy", *cit.*—Other quotations in this paragraph, and general information, from Miss Morgan's article, *cit.*—*Cf.* also "Popular Writer at Bermondsey Book Shop", *cit.*

⁸⁸ *T. P.'s & Cassell's Weekly*, *cit.*

plot, and phrase; as well as the necessity of a quick catching of the reader's interest, and of "a compression of detail and a concentration of essential features." "Half a page of action and half a page of speech are worth ten pages of narration and musing," he says, advising the would-be writer as follows: "Find the essential points, and allow them casually and unobviously to dominate your tale; concentrate the interest towards the vital moment of the story, and do not explode it too soon, or defer it until it misses fire." And again: "Always keep your action going, always let your dialogue have its significant tone, and be brief, but with the brevity of economy." (Incidentally, the truth of his remark, "If six authors were given the same plot to deal with they would produce six entirely different stories," has been abundantly proved by the recent *Fothergill Omnibus*.)

Finally, it is interesting to recall that he says, "I do not believe in specialisation or formulae in art;"⁸⁹ that he asserts⁹⁰ "Literature is not a thing you can make to order—like a sofa—unless you have the genius of Dickens or Shakespeare," and that "if your story is to deal with extraordinary characters, it will be a waste of treasure to invent extraordinary circumstances for them, and, *per contra*, if you are dealing with ordinary characters, then you must put them into extraordinary circumstances in order to secure a decent balance of effect;"⁹¹ and that he confesses,⁹² "In choosing titles for . . . various volumes from among the tales contained in each I have always selected what seemed to me the 'catchiest' title, not what I may have thought the best tale. And I prefer to call them tales because of a slight distinction in my mind which is nevertheless important to me, that is: a tale is told, a story is written. I have always aimed at creating for the reader an impression that he is being spoken to, rather than being written at."

⁸⁹ *Biblio., cit.*, p. 23.

⁹⁰ Art. on David Garnett, *cit.*, p. 53.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-1.

⁹² *Biblio., cit.*, p. 13.

II: THE POETRY¹

The general reception accorded Mr. Coppard's volumes of poetry has been described in the previous chapter; before going on to speak of that poetry as a whole, it seems wise to present a selection of reviewers' opinions to indicate the disparity of views held on the subject in question. *Collected Poems*, naturally, stimulated the greatest amount of comment, and it is from reviews of this volume that I shall in most cases quote.

A: With the Reviewers

In a review of *Yokohama Garland*, the *Literary Supplement* of the *London Times*² (seemingly more cordial to Mr. Coppard as a writer of prose than as a writer of verse) suggests the author is apt "to overrate the isolated experience of quality and to forget that the special achievement of poetry is reintegration;" and the same journal, examining *Collected Poems*, indicates that Mr. Coppard is better in free verse than in traditional forms. In the latter opinion, the *Southport Guardian* and the *Saturday Review of Literature* concur, while the *Saturday Review*, the *New York World*, and the *Manchester Guardian* take precisely the opposite view, the last maintaining that the free verse too often shows perception without feeling, as well as a lack of "unity of conception;"³ *Country Life* and *Books*, finally, consider the poet good in both types. The instance may be unimportant, but it is typical of numerous other disagreements in judgment.

Thus, the *Spectator* (though it admits Mr. Coppard "frequently reminds one of Herrick") says, "He has no master in the making of verse but the rich tradition of the English language. And he works from life, not books." The *New York World* calls him "no man's imitator;" and the *Irish Statesman*, remarking his

¹ I. e., the poetry in verse form.

² 8 Dec., 1927.—For all further reviews referred to in the present section, "With the Reviewers", see § IV: E of my biblio.

³ In its earlier review of *Hips and Haws* (21 June, 1922), this journal says Mr. Coppard "does not avoid the temptation of going for good words and hoping they will surround themselves with the necessary atmosphere."

pictorial quality, says, with blunt delicacy, "I believe his poetic pyjamas were handed to him by no one." The *Saturday Review*, on the other hand, sees Henley in some of the free verse, and the *London Mercury* (which considers Mr. Coppard "a victim of duality," and his verse "on the whole a disappointment"⁴) suspects the same ghost has set the larks twittering—suspects, too, a suggestion of the decadent nineties; the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* considers the verses "often derivative," and doesn't feel they make much "impression on the mind;" the *Long Island Daily Press* sees Shropshire in "Epitaph"; the *Saturday Review of Literature* finds suggestions of Housman and de la Mare in these "charming" poems that unfortunately lack "full conviction;" *Poetry*—in a rather curious review that accuses the poet roundly of using "refrains and choruses and all the characters and symbols of popular allegory"—maintains that an unfortunate comparison with de la Mare is invited by "Crazy Girl's Song", "Country Sabbath", and "Geography on the Jew's Harp"; and the *Hound and Horn* announces that "one is immediately conscious that behind the sweet echoes of Hardy, Housman, W. H. Davies, and the seventeenth-century lyrists, warbles a georgian poet."⁵

—But enough of contradictory notions on Mr. Coppard's debts—real or fancied—to other poets; let us examine a few more opinions from the press.

The *London Times Literary Supplement* grants Mr. Coppard accurate poetic observation of nature, but accuses him of occasional "fantastic conceits;"⁶ the *New Statesman* considers him better as "story-teller" than as poet; *Time and Tide* compares his poems to "the grievances of a captured fairy," though "colourless,

⁴ Though its review of *Hips and Haws* (Aug., 1922) acknowledges his "acute senses" as well as his "strained epithets".

⁵ In this general connection it may also be recalled that in reviewing *Hips and Haws* the *Weekly Westminster Gazette* (26 Aug., 1922) noted some reflection of "the gentle spirit of the lovely Chinese Poems of Mr. Arthur Waley;" while the *Daily News* (15 Nov., 1922) said, "Mr. Coppard has debts to the Chinese as well as the Latins, and his 'things seen' have something of the gentle delicacy of the Chinese lyrists." The *Irish Times* (28 July, 1922) held that the same volume showed "something of the pervading gloom of French poets of twenty years ago," as well as "their questioning spirit"!

⁶ Cf. also the *Commercial Appeal*.

musical and brittle as grey glass;" the *Scotsman* describes his verse as "light . . . rather pale and passionless," though "the artistry is sure;" the *Commercial Appeal* says flatly, "Mr. Coppard has nothing to say," "the performance seems a little managed and made to order," and these "are not poems;" the New York *Evening Post* labels *Collected Poems* "a disappointment" (though it acknowledges sixteen good poems); the Long Island *Daily Press* speaks of "Late Victorian, rose and lavender words" (though the *Commercial Appeal* refers to anti-Victorianism); the New York *World* finds a "naïveté" that is "artificial" but "effective;" the *Hound and Horn* stigmatizes the "rural diction" as "slightly synthetic;" the Chicago *News* says that Mr. Coppard won't "develop," and seemingly blames him because his poems won't "stick" in memory; and the Des Moines *Register* announces that this poet "neither sees nor feels. His women are models you see in any department store window. He has as much sex as the ambrosial sky of which he writes, and a scene to him is a collection of obsolete words resembling a colored print in a grab bag."

—Such moral fervor obviates comment, but it is pleasant to note the faith of the *Spectator*: "If he is not read now, Mr. Coppard may take some slight consolation in the fact that he very likely will be in the second, third, or twentieth generation after us." Nor is other endorsement lacking—from *Country Life*, the *North American Review*, the New York *Evening Sun* (which notices the poet's "pungent and sturdy" vocabulary), the *Christian Science Monitor*, the Chicago *Post* (which sanely classifies Mr. Coppard "at bottom among the poets of disillusion"⁷), *Books*, and other periodicals. Mr. Conrad Aiken remarks intelligently—in the New York *Bookman*—that Mr. Coppard "goes back to the seventeenth century for his quality . . . His formal lyrics . . . have the genuine freshness and neatness, the dexterously naïve mingling of conceptual and sensory view, which one associates with the best of Cavalier and metaphysical poetry. He has wit, too, and an engaging lustiness." But one of the two or three most intelligent, sensitive,

⁷ Cf., again, the *Commercial Appeal*, which also notes Mr. Coppard's imagism.

and cordial reviews is that of Miss Babette Deutsch, in *Books*, in which it is pointed out that Mr. Coppard shares with Donne, Herrick, Crashaw, and Webster "not merely certain technical mannerisms, but a unique vigor of attack, a rich sweetness of tone;" that he seems to be "one who believes in the sensual apprehension of truths beyond the understanding;" that "he has a benign acidity;" and that his "eye for the noble and the lovely has been sharpened because he has lived with the evil and the ugly. Whatever he has looked upon he has seen with an intensity of vision that approaches the supersensuous."

—But Miss Deutsch's judgment is exceptional, and one may perhaps go on from this point to indulge in personal comment, feeling that, at worst, one can't prove more mistaken than many of the reviewers—and feeling, too, that certain remarks in Mr. Coppard's much-abused "Advertisement" have been richly justified.

B: Personal Comment

1

Reflective readers of contemporary poetry must inevitably detect, time and again, chimes that ring back the dead years of the Elizabethan and Caroline lyrists: the capricious rhythms of Shakespeare, the cool clarities of Ben Jonson, the tangled simplicities of Herrick, the verbal infelicities of Donne, and the rich vitality and unabashed frankness of many others have all left echoes that can escape no sensitive ear. So one feels that those readers who have found suggestions of this old music in Mr. Coppard are sure in their response: Where would "April"—utterly fresh, clear, and crystalline—be more at home than in a collection of Elizabethan madrigals? What, save Elizabethan, gusto is suggested by "Autumn Song"? Where more readily than among the Carolines could one parallel the half-flippant brashness of "The Phoenix"?—And so on: the enduring qualities of the Elizabethans and their wayward kin have unquestionably colored the strands of this poet's thought, though that fact need not embarrass the poet, who stands on thoroughly good legs of his own, and who has merely interpreted in the light of his

own individuality moods which the "sons of Ben," as well as the brothers, could have shared. One feels that here is a man who would have been as welcome in the pastoral loneliness of Herrick, or the boisterous give-and-take of the Mermaid, as he is in his own local inn.

For Mr. Coppard is—save in a few instances which insist on recognition—eminently natural throughout his poetry, and entirely frank in personal revelation. He is, fundamentally, neither innovator nor experimenter; whether his verse be "free" or "regular," he is concerned with the old tranquillities, the old ecstasies. And he is an artist to the bone. One recalls his statement in the preface to *The Man from Kilsheelan*; one notes that, like Mr. Yeats, he likes to rework his verse (generally to its improvement).⁸ Yet he is one who—again like Mr. Yeats—finds it difficult to be confined by highly artificial lyric forms⁹ (which may account for his frequent use of free verse).

Technically, Mr. Coppard is almost invariably satisfactory, and often hauntingly so (that false rhyme in the second stanza of "Bereavement" is a trivial annoyance): consider the meditative quality of his merely cadenced verse (in which he might be talking to himself), the fantastic arpeggios of "Geography on the Jew's Harp", the delicately imperfect rhyme to be found in "Betty Perrin",¹⁰ the unforgettable perfection of "Night Piece", "Stay, O Stay", "Curfew", "Winter Field", "Complaint of Time", or "A Carol for Margaret Chester". (And how can one avoid echoing the wonder of many others at this poet's genius in choosing titles!)—Yet there are things in Mr. Coppard's poetry that one could wish away, if only to prevent contrast with the indubitably finer things he offers in rich profusion—and thus assure greater evenness of impression. Since, then, some quarrelling seems necessary, we may as well have done with the unpleasant task at once.

⁸ Cf. *Appendix B*, below—which, incidentally, suggests reasons for wishing Mr. Coppard were less capricious in punctuating!—A collation of the texts of "The Invisible Rain" shows how he will worry a single line.

⁹ Cf., e. g., *Appendix B*, 1, b.

¹⁰ The favor found by subtly imperfect rhyme in our day is widely illustrated in the work of Mr. Yeats, Mr. de la Mare, Mr. Louis Untermeyer (*Burning Bush*), et al.

2

It seems unfortunate, in the first place, that Mr. Coppard has indulged so immoderately in free verse that thirty-five of the sixty-five poems in his collected edition must be placed in this category—unfortunate because free verse tempts vague and easy moods into mild expression as disciplined verse seldom does, and because it too readily becomes a habit rather than the necessity of a given impulse. It is my conviction that every legitimate poetic impulse tends to crystallize into a right artistic form, though familiarity with literary types, the unrecognized influence of example, personality, experience, and a host of other psychological factors undoubtedly help to determine the crystallization; free verse (if one may judge from the evidence suggested by innumerable writers, from Whitman to Mr. Sandburg) tempts its devotees to impose a mold of technical "freedom" that is veriest artistic slavery on some of their finest impulses: the superficial freedom becomes a habit; the true freedom is utterly lost sight of. Furthermore, free verse (speaking generally, granting the occasional legitimacy of a "free" technique, and always remembering that form in itself has no obviously necessary connection with poetic quality¹¹) gives a poet too much time, if I may be understood—time to be diffuse, self-conscious, artificial. What better explanation than Mr. Coppard's too-ready yielding to the temptations of an easy and casual form,¹² then, need be sought¹³ for the dilettantism untrue to his real nature, but inevitably suggested by poems like "The Sapling"; or for the brittle artificiality of the opening of "The Young Man under the Walnut Tree" (with the special infelicity and impossible figure of its third line)—

¹¹ Despite the implications of Mr. John McClure, who considers poetry essentially nothing more than "music in words" (*American Mercury*, Vol. II, No. 5).

¹² Despite his assertion (*cf.* Morgan, Louise, *Everyman*, no. *cit.*) that "writing free verse . . . is far more difficult than writing traditional verse."

¹³ Since an arbitrary reference to considerations of taste, dignity, or general artistic integrity is wholly unwarranted, though a number of "conceits" must be conceded.

"Observe the rotund galleries of this walnut tree,
 Its shades of dull stiff wax
 Ushering a pool of air, a pool and a green pavilion"?

—Such betrayal of an artist by a misleading medium will explain why, of all the thirty-five poems recently referred to (their frequently delicate cadence notwithstanding), only "A Carol for Margaret Chester", "The Bride", "The White Stone", "Quiet", and "The Oracle" belong for me among those of the collected edition that count for most in the final analysis—though, even so, I am less certain of the last four than of the "Carol", in which a daring conception is most delicately handled¹⁴ and an unforgettable music is evoked.

For the rest, there is little any reasonable lover of poetry can object to in Mr. Coppard's work. We may smile when the poet is merely naughty (as in "The Calamity", with its "Was ever fool like I!")—a line worthy of Mr. Kipling at his most mediocre; we may feel that he is merely pecking about among words when he says—in "The Little Tempest"—

"Long-lastingly the shower
 Beats down the chimney smoke,"

or—in "The Sapling"—

"The moon,
 Slim lilac Venus,
 May fall upon their pride
 Despisingly;"

we may notice that he has certain favorite words—for example, "honied"¹⁵ and "lovely"¹⁶—only to reflect that there is no reason why he shouldn't have; we may observe that—sometimes effectively, despite the rhetoricians!—he uses "so" in isolation

¹⁴ As the *London Times Literary Supplement* review of *Yokohama Garland* points out.

¹⁵ Cf. "Summer Night's Rain", "Eclipse", "Andante", "The Bride".

¹⁶ Cf. "April Fool", "Nocturne: New Moon", "Midwinter Night's Dream"

as an intensive;¹⁷ we may find that he even permits himself to subtilize in a fashion not unaligned with that of his favorite aversion, John Donne;¹⁸ we may discover that—in comparing raspberries to

"little lumps of meat
On the hooks of the butcher,"

in "The Tinker", or a butterfly's wing to "the fin of a cod," in "The Antic Shrine"—he is capable of a grotesquery as deliberate as that of Mr. Richard Aldington in comparing the moon to "a pregnant woman,"¹⁹ or in addressing Lesbia as "You morsel left half cold on Caesar's plate;"²⁰ and we may realize that he has a normal share of sentimentality, as the close of "Yokohama Garland", where the face seems to be deliberately set for tears, or "The Dead Garden", with its pit "solaced with dark briars," appears to testify.²¹ But these are not matters of prime significance, though certain mannerisms are legitimately to be observed.

For example, one notes the frequent use of inversions, as in "Andante":

"Sways not the liliated stem,
The rose not sways;"

or in "A Carol for Margaret Chester":

"Carols the blacksmith's anvil;"

or in "The Well":

"Where the warped sun not lingers"—

¹⁷ Cf. "So green, so pale, they are as clouded glass" and "The sky so stoops upon them" ("The Well"), "The so brief hours/From age so dread" ("April Fool"), "so little to disclose" ("Yokohama Garland"), etc.

¹⁸ Cf., e. g., the texts of "Mendacity" as collated in *Appendix B*. The treatment of the second stanza illustrates how Mr. Coppard will sometimes print a revised version of a published piece, only to restore later the original form.

¹⁹ "London", *Images—Old and New*.

²⁰ "Lesbia", *ibid.*

²¹ Cf. also "The Sluggard", "The Two Nude Virgins", and the close of "The Threshold".

inversions which do not invariably enrich the cadence, though they do in the "Carol" and certain other poems.²² Similarly, one is aware²³ of the occasional imitation of a kind of Anglo-Irish; of a tendency toward exclamation and apostrophe;²⁴ of a fondness for grave accents²⁵ and abstractions like "love," "truth," "beauty," "wisdom", and so forth;²⁶ and of a constant preoccupation with time and the idea of time²⁷—a preoccupation which, however often it insinuates itself into the reader's consciousness, is, strangely, never tiresome, and is mentioned here merely because it has the quality of a mannerism—or manner—of thought.

But Mr. Coppard, whatever his faults or strikingly recurrent peculiarities, is never commonplace. Certain pieces, naturally, have less appeal than others—but here the matter of individual taste inevitably asserts prejudices. Thus, to me "Geography on the Jew's Harp" represents nothing but a humorous exhibition of verbal trickery in justification of an apt title, and the longer poems seem less conspicuously successful than the shorter, though "Pelagea" unquestionably achieves an atmosphere and the restrained suggestion of a story, as "The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs" presents a character. Further, I cannot help feeling that Mr. Coppard should avoid the rightly-or-

²² E. g., "The Lock" ("Easy is unhappiness, difficult is joy") or "The Streams" ("Beautiful are her glances to me/As she lights the tall candle").

²³ In "The Streams" and "The Tinker".

²⁴ Cf. "Behold, behold, how bright" and "How fair the galaxy swings" ("Nocturne: New Moon"), "O cool-mouthed night" ("Dusk"), and "O chains" ("Truant").

²⁵ Cf. "drownèd sleep" ("Andante"), "self-condemnèd" ("The Calamity"), and "designèd" ("Stay, O Stay").

²⁶ Cf. "The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs", "The Invisible Rain", "The White Stone", "Mendacity", etc.

²⁷ Cf. "sweet time," "ever-living, ever-dead/Time . . .", and "Soft smiling time" ("April Fool"); "triumphs of time" and "time's disgraces" ("Night Piece"); "The old thatched house . . ./Time itself has kneeled upon it" and "vague honour tempting time" ("Pelagea"); "Time like a thief conspires" ("Stay, O Stay"); old Daniel's "faith in time" ("The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs"); "ruthless time" ("The Well"); "creeping time" ("Quiet"—cf. *As You Like It*, Act II, Sc. VII: "the creeping hours of time"); "Time unblest" ("Curfew"); "Complaint of Time" (*title*); "this chink of time" ("The Antic Shrine"); "void as time . . .", ("Yokohama Garland"); etc.—One thinks of the concern with "beauty" shown by Mr. Masfield, Miss Teasdale, and numerous others.

wrongly-so-dubbed "metaphysical" species of poetry:²⁸ his gift lies in the simple and clear—in suggestion by overtone and implication, not in profound deduction—as the ineffectiveness of "Mendacity" and "The Well", compared with the complete success of "Curfew" and "Night Piece", should testify. But even not-altogether-satisfying meditations like "Midwinter Night's Dream" will contain lines like

"And not too lonely hangs our heaven,"

and may end with a charming picture. And if I cannot (remembering the fondness for "wounds" in the sky shown by Oscar Wilde²⁹) consider the alliterative "Wounding with white wonder the attentive sky" of "Summer Night's Rain" an attractive line, or its figure in harmony with the tone of the suggested picture, that is perhaps neither here nor there. So enough of carping, which seems at best an ungrateful and churlish thing in the face of this poet's offerings.

3

The question of "influences" apparent in the work of any considerable poet is always apt to be a rather intangible one; in recognizing it in connection with Mr. Coppard's work I am far from imputing plagiarism or slavish imitation. It is true that one recognizes Bourdillon's "The mind has a thousand eyes" in the "One mind has a thousand eyes" of "Pelagea", but it is also clear that the latter represents either an adaptation made on the assumption that its original would be obvious to any literate person, or a wholly unconscious crib.

Mr. Coppard has referred to Hardy, Mr. Masfield, Mr. Yeats, Robert Bridges, and Mr. W. H. Davies as the thumb, forefinger, middle finger, and two "smaller digits" of contemporary poetry, with "some claims upon the notice of posterity . . . because of the fine quality of their general mass of work,"³⁰

²⁸ For a discussion of this label, see the introduction to Professor F. E. Schelling's *Book of Seventeenth Century Lyrics* (Boston, 1899).

²⁹ Cf. Wilde's "Ravenna" and "Sonnet on Approaching Italy".

³⁰ "Mr. Masfield Collected", *Spectator*, 1 Mar., 1924.

and his interest in Burns and certain other poets has already been indicated. Yet in reading his poems I think more frequently of Mr. A. E. Housman (who should have disputed the places of Bridges and Mr. Davies with Mr. Hodgson and Mr. de la Mare had I been apportioning "digits") than of any of these. Certainly "The Plover" (especially its last stanza:

"I, too, die on my journey;
Yet tender voices strive,
And call and call and call me
As though I were alive."),

"Epitaph", and "The Prodigal Son" (with its

"Sad are the harvests I amass,
And empty of all grain")

suggest the accent and healthy pessimism of Mr. Housman; "Flesh and Blood"—to me a failure as a poem because the thought has not fully crystallized—somehow, despite subject and metre, recalls, in

"Goes on my soul, the sharer
Of a shade that never sleeps,"

the poet of "The Welsh Marches";³¹ and "The Return" ("The road lies white before me . . .") has tramping through it a cousin of the Shropshire lad who murmured "White in the moon the long road lies," while "The Rogue" curiously hints of that same Shropshire lad grown older—and surly enough to sneer at "Whatever brute and blackguard made the world."³²

The pervading atmosphere of seventeenth century poetry in Mr. Coppard's work has already been recognized—and applauded; its presence can hardly escape the notice of even a casual reader. So—not to be tiresome in citing examples to

³¹"None will part us, none undo

The knot that makes one flesh of two . . ."

³²*Last Poems*, IX.

prove the obvious—it seems entirely reasonable that, since Herrick didn't do so, Mr. Coppard should have written "April Fool"; as it seems unsurprising to hear lines like "There is a folly in fear that has no fear of folly"³³ whispering "Donne"—for, despite his dislike for the old dean, Mr. Coppard sometimes resembles him³⁴ in pursuing truth in crotchety fashion, along avenues of the unexpected, around odd corners. For the rest, although he shows a few traces of a flippancy similar to Suckling's and some kinship with Carew, he adds, as "The Bride" shows, a touch of reflection, of philosophy, to mere Cavalier sensuousness and amorousness.

Less definite "influences" than the foregoing it would be extremely hazardous to assert; one can only record personal—and perhaps inconsequential—impressions. Thus, the very English "To Winter" suggests to me an individual blend of Shakespeare and Mr. Hodgson; I think of Mr. Carl Sandburg when I read, in "The Way to Tipperary",

"Is the lot of a man this only for ever:
To be saying good-bye to beauty?"

and of Whitman when I consider the use of place-names in, and the conversational tone of, "The Little Tempest". I see Milton in "Immortal spirit goading immortal clay;"³⁵ I recall the Hardy who wrote "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'" when I read "Winter Field" (which loses nothing by this comparison); I find that the wholly original and lovely "Stay, O Stay" develops exquisitely a theme that Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Cloud and Wind" also suggests (" . . . Hope sows what Love shall never reap"); I feel that "The Apostate" and "The Calamity" curiously suggest in their bravado a certain kinship with the Burns who celebrated "The lass that made the bed to me;" and "The Well", with its

³³ "Yokohama Garland."

³⁴ Cf. "Mendacity" (remembering its several versions), in which the poet seems to get tangled up in his own thought.

³⁵ "The Well."

"The bucket falls
 From ruthless time to timeless truth that waits—
 Perhaps in the bottom of a hidden well,"

somehow brings Mr. Frost's "For Once, Then, Something" to mind. I cannot, however, even in "Betty Perrin", see much essential comparison³⁶ with the poems of Mr. de la Mare,—whimsical, exquisite, and responsive to certain overtones that elude Mr. Coppard,—and this despite vocabulary and the character-pieces of, for example, *The Listeners*.

—From which point one may proceed to a more general examination of the poetry under consideration.

4

It seems true to observe, in the first place, that Mr. Coppard's great general qualities are the pictorial and descriptive; indeed (in "Pelagea", "Yokohama Garland", and "Country Sabbath", for example) one sometimes feels that a given poem is really a draft for a prose tale. It is also true that—in Mr. Frost's phrase—one has to be "versed in country things" to comprehend Mr. Coppard completely: all through his work one hears the mouse "under the door-ladder,"³⁷ the "tireless weir," and

"The coughing ox,
 Who sighs in the thickening dew
 The night through;"³⁸

one marks the flutter of passing moths and bats, or sees country folk and country houses, with great beams that "will . . . nourish history":³⁹ but this fact need disquiet not even the most perversely urban of possible readers, who can disregard the question of whether bats have a "trickling flight"⁴⁰ with small loss of enjoyment. It merely happens that, so far as diffused qualities are concerned, this poet is at his best when,

³⁶ Though I do not forget "April Fool" and a few others.

³⁷ "Quiet."

³⁸ "Nocturne: New Moon."

³⁹ "Pelagea."

⁴⁰ "Yokohama Garland."

in pastoral mood (and sometimes mode), he is writing of night, rusticity (country gardens—country characters), and the incongruities of love. He says concerning an eclipse,

"Living alone such things importune me,"⁴¹

and the confession helps one to understand how he can write an "Autumn Song" with "Gusty-galing Autumn" in the very swing of it, a "Night Piece" haunting⁴² and musical as even the finest poetry rarely is, or a piece of imagism as exquisite and moving in its implications as "Winter Field" (which, though utterly different in subject and treatment, is worthy in essential kind to stand beside H. D.'s "Helen"). The man is close to nature: one feels the dew—and senses frequently the clarity of an idyl—in poem after poem—personality-sketch, nocturne, or personal lyric; one relishes with him the "unknown richness" of a "wind's following";⁴³ one takes comfort with him in feeling that wind and earth and sky "survive and accomplish justice;"⁴⁴ one listens hushed with him while

"The ancient songs of evening cease
In the cloaked thickets,"⁴⁵

and watches while "The fields gather up their grace,"⁴⁶ though one may be a bit puzzled on hearing

"The breasts are cold
Of dissolute roses dying in the briar!"⁴⁷

But one needn't doubt the acceptance of an earthy pantheism here,—it is all a case of love and the "wild sweet dust,"⁴⁸—as

⁴¹ "Quiet"—an example of what I take to be impressionism.

⁴² Despite the faulty astronomy noticed by the *London Times Literary Supplement* in reviewing *Yokohama Garland!*

⁴³ "Simple Day."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ "The Oracle."—Notice the Greek note, very generally sustained in the lyrics of "H. D."

⁴⁶ "The Way to Tipperary."

⁴⁷ "Summer Night's Rain."

⁴⁸ "The Young Man under the Walnut Tree."

one needn't question the essential acceptance of all life in its simplicity. (Even Christ becomes "the Little Boy that is to look after the sheep"⁴⁹) And one awakes anew to a recognition of the eternities that are beauty, and life, and death, as well as to an awareness of that mortality which is often ugliness. So while the "what is to come comes ever" of "Pelagea" implies no new philosophy, the poem itself urges confidence in the life-force rather than a weary fatalism, imparting a sense of the richness of loam—vital and certain, of damp earth after rain, of the surety of sunlight. The poet is fundamentally pagan, with a sense of humor that saves him from any futile concern with questions of morality.—How much better to admit an "arrogant will to live on"⁵⁰ to muse on things

"Fair as love winging to sweet love
The golden trembling arrow"⁵¹

But Mr. Coppard has no illusions about love: he accepts it as a something "whose anguish is far deeper than its boon,"⁵² knowing that its "course" is

"Less brief than honour's,"⁵³

and evincing a desire for peace amid

"The mute triumphant languor of the grass,"⁵⁴

though admitting that "without love there is nothing."⁵⁵ So his views are not out of alignment with much contemporary opinion, as they are certainly not in alignment with the conventional opinion of Victorian romanticists or the sympathies of the erotic school of the nineties, with its puerile attempts to cultivate a "delicate Lust."⁵⁶ His most memorable utterances on love

⁴⁹ "A Carol for Margaret Chester."

⁵⁰ "The Antic Shrine."

⁵¹ "Pelagea."

⁵² "Eclipse."

⁵³ "The Oracle."

⁵⁴ "Eclipse."

⁵⁵ "Pelagea."

⁵⁶ Cf. Mr. Symons' "Rosa Mundi".

consist in four lyrics—"Stay, O Stay", "The Trick of Change", "Complaint of Time", and "A Lover", to list them in order of composition—which may as well be quoted here, especially since two of them have not yet been included in a volume:

STAY, O STAY

Of love's designèd joys
 Dream only, do not speak,
Lest every noting hour
 A separate vengeance take.

Holy is love, but frail
 With love's confined desires,
Against whose chosen urn
 Time like a thief conspires.

Keep silence; love will grow
 In its own darkened air,
A moon whose clouds do make
 Heaven and itself more fair.

THE TRICK OF CHANGE⁵⁷

Long though the truth be hidden
 When love enseals the eye,
The trick of change is certain,
 And Time will cast the die.

No season lasts forever,
 No pity lives for long,
Love will take up its wages,
 And sing a different song.

Though fancy fall a-grieving
 Life upon love succeeds;
So out, thou February:
 Come March, with burly deeds!

⁵⁷ Reprinted by permission of the *New Republic*.

COMPLAINT OF TIME

Though we had given to love
All time gave to us,
Some pang would breed thereof
Still to undo us.

Time from whose gifts are drawn
Pains without measure,
May grant one day, to dawn
All for our pleasure.

But till that day receive
This fond profusion,
Leave us to sleep, and leave
Time to confusion.

A LOVER⁶⁸

When I loved truly
I was a boy;
To worship unduly
Was my great joy.

When I loved wisely
I loved not well,
For love and wisdom
Move separable.

Calypso dissembles,
Psyche forswears,
And loth is Phryne
For lover's cares.

But true to its compass
The planet turns,
Forgetting, forsaken—
And still it burns.

Now time has triumphed
And my loves are gone,
I keep my vision
Of every one;

⁶⁸ *New Republic* version; reprinted by permission.

Though even the fairest,
Most sweet of the fair,
Seems but a ghost
With a piteous air.

—Poems like these do much by way of revealing a personal philosophy and characteristic ideas, but they are not alone in this quality. Thus, "The Well" makes clear that to Mr. Coppard man is ever

"Confederate god and everlasting clown;"

"Eclipse" and "The Horse" (even "The Plover") testify to a sympathy for dumb animals akin to Mr. Hodgson's, if less angry; "The Conscript Speaks", "The Glorious Survivors", and "The Obsequies" show a trenchant, scornful bitterness on the subject of war that all humane folk should agree in—the second of these poems being a particularly sarcastic indictment to be bracketed with Mr. Noyes' "Victory Ball" and some of Mr. Sassoon's more pregnant pieces. Nor need one pass over as unrevealing certain isolated passages like

" . . . the world is a mirror in which God sees himself,"⁵⁹

or

" . . . there is something that lives here within me,
Diffident, sombre,
Whose tears of tranquillity have long ceased to flow,"⁶⁰

or

"Death is a journeyman god,
He has never moved my devotions,"⁶¹

or

"All my life is a rehearsal for something that never takes place"⁶²

(though a charming, half-wry indolence soon leads Mr. Coppard's speculation to what is rather wonder than regret).—Whether or

⁵⁹ "The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs."

⁶⁰ "The Dead Garden."

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² "Narcissus."

not, finally, one is to deduce autobiographical revelations from such poems as "The Dead Garden", "Narcissus", or "The White Stone"—or, indeed, from the order of composition of the various poems—it would naturally be impertinent to inquire.

It is, on the other hand, wholly legitimate to enjoy the characters in these poems. Character-presentation in verse would naturally interest a lover of Browning⁶³ (another oblique influence!), and we find here folk as various as Betty Perrin—

"Sisterless as Eve
With the Sword against the Door,"

despite her pious sisters; old Daniel,⁶⁴

"Almost as old as evil, as weak as honesty,"

a man who "exudes nonentity" while

"Letting stiff silence slake itself in him;"

Pelagea, with her "unforgetting eyes;" the father, in "Yokohama Garland",

"Whose apothegms hopped about us like truculent fleas,"

and the brother, in the same poem, who "had much to hide and so little to disclose;" and the carpenter⁶⁵ who

"is old, and full of sweat and spittle,
And coughs like a hoosey ewe."

The example just quoted serves to suggest the robust quality of Mr. Coppard's vocabulary. The man loves words for their own sake; he likes to savor them. So we find that in "Andante"

⁶³ Or of Hardy and Wordsworth.

⁶⁴ "The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs."

⁶⁵ "Pelagea": Only one instance of the healthy robustness and humor of Mr. Coppard, which should be a sufficient answer to the suggestion that his verse is tainted with a *Yellow Book* or *Savoy* atmosphere.

he makes the stars "noursle;" that in "Midwinter Night's Dream" he cannot "bruit" his fancy; that in "The Antic Shrine" he speaks of "muzzy drops," in "The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs" of "inutile hungers," and in "The Sluggard" of "the couth hills" (and how much less effective would be "the known hills"!). He likes compounds like "unrigid" and "unsuit;" he startles with the absolute rightness of a phrase like "the cocksfoot grasses,"⁶⁶ delicately implying a figure with an originality akin to that of Beddoes in speaking of "ghosts' moonshine;"⁶⁷ he even allows words in themselves to dictate his figures—else why the "no more conversation than a gourd" of "The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs"? Generally the unusual words or coinages to which he inclines give a delightful effect of originality and freshness: never do they suggest pedantry, bookishness, or unjustifiable daring, and only in a few cases does too-obvious choosing injure personal element or pictorial effectiveness as it does in "Storm on the Heath". And the poet has the wit seldom to press language so hard as he does in "The Sapling", where he speaks of an "unthrift tree."

He has the wit, too, to indulge his gift for imagistic writing, as poems like "Dusk", "Quiet", "The Oracle", and "To One Unknown and Gone" abundantly testify. Consequently he gives us an interior like that in "The Streams", with its lovely close, warm with simple life—

"Beautiful are her glances to me
As she lights the tall candle;"

or a changing canvas like that of "Storm on the Heath"; or, again, an exquisitely delicate projection of pictorial sensuousness like that of "Midwinter Night's Dream"—

"My mate lies in her bed
In a shift of green silk . . .
A dove, a tender dove . . .
Her small breasts droop like two young moons,
Her eyelids are like shells that have lain in dew."

⁶⁶ "Andante."

⁶⁷ "Wolfram's Song."

No less fresh than his imagistic qualities are Mr. Coppard's figures and comparisons. The poet who says the moon is as clear

"As an infinite hourglass
Spilling pale cold streams,"⁶⁸

that the mist coils "like a subtle wrestler round the hill,"⁶⁹ that the sunlight "pounds" "soft rocks" of cloud "like an axe,"⁷⁰ or that death is "the shore of idle waters"⁷¹—who writes

"And the flame at the candlewick pulls
Like a frightened horse at its tether,"⁷²

"Mum as a Christmas lark,"⁷³

". . . quiet as an empty purse,"⁷⁴

". . . undissuadable
As a man in the wrong,"⁷⁵

or

"And like a silent passionate woman
Earth, the beloved, lies but does not sleep"⁷⁶—

assuredly—and rightly—does not suggest the reviver of trite phrases and stereotyped figures, but does suggest the sane individualist and the original artist that Mr. Coppard unquestionably is.

Finally, it may be remarked that while this poet is—like Mr. Hodgson—more memorable for lyrics as entities than for lyrics as mere frameworks on which striking "readings of life" are hung, "readings of life" are by no means absent from his work.

⁶⁸ "Quiet."

⁶⁹ "The Invisible Rain."

⁷⁰ "Simple Day."

⁷¹ "Narcissus."

⁷² "Pelagea."

⁷³ "The Sluggard."

⁷⁴ "The Tinker."

⁷⁵ "The Little Tempest."

⁷⁶ "Andante."

But these readings (most frequent in the free verse) do not have the lyrical spark, the sudden revelation, of such lines as Meredith's

"Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life!"⁷⁷—

they have, rather, like Mr. Frost's, the quality of having been deliberately thought out—or else I misjudge shamefully both Mr. Frost and lines like

" . . . it is easy to quarrel with whom we love,"⁷⁸

"We are the victims of our own resentments,"⁷⁹

"What the voice cannot utter fills the mind with echoes,"⁸⁰
and

"We are but the habits of the earth,
Its passion for similitude."⁸¹

Yet Mr. Coppard, being always a fine poet at bottom, has his full share of memorable phrases and effective figures—phrases like "besieging sleep,"⁸² figures like that which compares the sound of a weir to "the cry of a little everlasting train"⁸³—or like those already mentioned.

So one hopes Mr. Coppard was mistaken in saying "My desire for writing poetry has disappeared . . . Now, I find I can say everything I want to say in stories"⁸⁴—hopes, too, that despite the preface to *Collected Poems* there will be shortly a "Selected" edition of his verse. He has called poetry⁸⁵ "instant and simple and clear:" his own best lyrics are precisely and

⁷⁷ *Modern Love*, L.

⁷⁸ "The Little Tempest."

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*—A restatement of an old maxim.

⁸⁰ "Yokohama Garland."

⁸¹ "The Young Man under the Walnut Tree."

⁸² "The Young Man under the Walnut Tree."

⁸³ "Nocturne: New Moon."

⁸⁴ Quoted by Morgan, Louise, *Everyman*, no. *cit.*—Yet a new poem, *Easter Day*, has just been announced (Oct., 1931)!

⁸⁵ "Not Poetry," *Saturday Review*, 15 Nov., 1924.

undeniably that in eminent degree—"Night Piece"; "Stay, O Stay"; "Curfew"—as simple, and at least as memorable, as anything Mr. W. H. Davies has to offer; "Winter Field"; "Complaint of Time"—which illustrates an admirable handling of vowel sounds and a perfect blending of mood, thought, and music; "A Carol for Margaret Chester"; "Christmas Apples"—which evokes a character with scarcely a word of description; "Autumn Song"; "April Fool"—than which few poems are more gracious and suave; "Nocturne: New Moon"; "The Unfortunate Miller"—spare as a folk ballad, and grimly—if a bit self-consciously—ironical; "Injunction"; and "Betty Perrin"—with a whimsicality that, like most whimsicality of consequence, glances significantly at truth—poems that are infinitely too good for less distinguished company. Of them all, "Night Piece", at least, must be quoted here:

The Pole, the Bear, and Cassiopeia,
 So softly shining,
 Dark heaven, dark world, to an exquisite dim
 Defeat consigning,
 Do turn by day away from us, away from us
 Their careless faces,
 From our golden fire and the triumphs of time
 As from time's disgraces.

We are but dew of their dawn, a commodious dew
 That life engenders,
 Of death and its dark mysterious fears
 Getters and spenders,
 Whose spirit seeks the wooing air, that wooing air
 On heaven reclining
 With the Pole, the Bear, and Cassiopeia,
 Endlessly shining.

—Poems like this, it seems to me, argue their author a very considerable figure even in a day that has produced men like Hardy, Mr. Yeats, Mr. Masfield, Mr. Hodgson, Mr. de la Mare, and Mr. A. E. Housman—than whom, as there is at least one

reader stubbornly convinced, English literature has no finer poets to offer.⁸⁶

III: PROSE BACKGROUNDS OF THE POETRY

By the somewhat vague title, "Prose Backgrounds of the Poetry", I intend reference to a more or less casual consideration—fortified by extensive quoting—of whatever elements in Mr. Coppard's prose fiction may be reasonably supposed to have

⁸⁶ The verse of *Pink Furniture* may seem to some readers to demand at least passing mention. I can only say that to me (while I recognize its occasional touches of humor) it seems to be a little too obviously "written down" to children, and to suggest the burlesquing of Stevenson and Mr. Milne. Yet "Love is a panther's foot" remains a haunting line; "Born on a Friday" has an amusingly weird air; some of the miscellaneous verses are musical, if trivial; and the pirate song is a hilarious parody (worthy of W. S. Gilbert) which demands quotation:

'On a landfall dark
Came the pirates' barque,
Its plunder to bestow:
Lots of indigo and coffee,
With some butterscotch and toffee.
O my coffee and my in-di-go!

I will haul my freight
Said the bold seamate
Come rain, come hail, come snow;
With my indigo and coffee
And my butterscotch and toffee.
O my coffee and my in-di-go!

But the coastguard he
Said, "This can never be,
My children weep below,
Not for indigo and coffee
But for butterscotch and toffee."
O my coffee and my in-di-go!

Then the mate made a fuss
With his bully blunderbuss,
And away that guard did go,
Leaving indigo and coffee,
All the butterscotch and toffee.
O my coffee and my in-di-go!

And the pirate crew
Sang Hullabullaloo!
Ya ha! Ya he! Ya ho!
Take your indigo and coffee,
Give us butterscotch and toffee.
O my coffee and my in-di-go!

particular appeal for one primarily interested in his poetry, whether that poetry appear clearly outlined in verse form or reveal itself by moods and moments in the prose (since poetry may be a smoldering under-flame in the earth of either medium); simply and specifically, I propose especially to call attention to certain interesting parallels of one sort or another between the verse and the prose, and to note some of the "readings of life," comment on the characteristic humor, recall some of the more lyrically conceived characters, and point out some of the strikingly lyrical passages of that prose. Before doing this, however, I shall attempt to do justice to the reviewers by quoting a few of their opinions.

A

The reviewers have frequently recognized the poetic quality of much of Mr. Coppard's prose, in considering which they have used phrase after phrase that could be legitimately applied to the verse as well. Thus, in the *London Times Literary Supplement's* notice of *The Black Dog*¹ we find a recognition of the author's "peculiar blend of poetry and realism," and read, "Such stories as 'The Black Dog' and 'The Poor Man' have . . . the unity we look for in a poem . . ."; in the *Sketch's* review of *Silver Circus* we notice another recognition of the poet behind the book. And similar experiences are not few in number. In reviewing *Fishmonger's Fiddle*, the *Irish Statesman*, remarking that the prose "often recalls James Stephens,"² says that in it Mr. Coppard is frequently "drawn into the net of poetry;" in reviewing *Silver Circus*, the *Spectator* notes the "poetic or symbolic" quality of the tales, while the *Manchester Guardian* speaks of the author's "predominantly lyrical" imagination, and of his "characterised conceits," comparable in nature to those of poetry (which are marked by "a certain personal waywardness, an element of arbitrary caprice"); in reviewing *The Field of Mustard*, the *Nation and Athenaeum* points out, significantly, that the end of "Fifty Pounds" "reminds us that the short-story form

¹ Cf. also its review of *Clorinda* . . . and *Hips and Haws*.—For all reviews of the prose, cf. § V of my biblio.

² And it sometimes does, as will appear later.

is as arbitrary as a sonnet and much more mysterious in its illusion." And so on. Mr. Gerald Bullett, considering *Fishmonger's Fiddle*,³ says Mr. Coppard has "a zest for life such as Whitman had, tempered by humour such as Whitman consistently lacked. Mr. Coppard, in love with the physical universe, takes excited pleasure in the colours and contours of even the simplest objects;" Mr. P. C. Kennedy, also discussing *Fishmonger's Fiddle*,⁴ remarks on the author's "lyric charm, and intellectual clarity and purity," incidentally noting that "inversion is becoming a habit"⁵ and that Mr. Coppard "begins to stand in danger of his own mannerisms;" Mr. L. P. Hartley, commenting on *Silver Circus*,⁶ says (thereby reminding one again of poems like "The Road to Tipperary"—and of Whitman), "The diversity of life . . . he delights in . . ." But Mr. Ford Madox Ford (who believes in being thoroughly generous when he is generous!), praising *The Field of Mustard*,⁷ makes the most sweeping claims when he says, "Mr. Coppard is almost the first English writer to get into English prose the peculiar quality of English lyric verse. I do not mean that he is metrical; I mean that hitherto no English prose writer has had the fancy, the turn of imagination, the wisdom, the as it were piety and beauty of the great seventeenth century lyricists like Donne or Herbert—or even Herrick."⁸

Certain reviews of Mr. Coppard's verse are also of particular interest in the present connection. For example, the London *Sunday Times*,⁹ considering *Pelagea*, says, "'The Unfortunate Miller' has the irony and economy of phrase of Mr. Coppard's

³ *Daily News*, *cit.*

⁴ *New Statesman*, *cit.*

⁵ The *New Statesman's* review of *The Field of Mustard* repeats this warning.

⁶ *Saturday Review*, *cit.*

⁷ *Books* (N. Y. *Herald Tribune*), *cit.*—Some three years earlier, in introducing Mr. Coppard's work to readers of the *Transatlantic Review* (Jan., 1924; p. 97), Mr. Ford had said magnanimously, if on an inaccurate assumption, ". . . if American magazines did not print with eagerness all that Mr. Coppard vouchsafed them we should have started the *Transatlantic Review* to print him . . ."

⁸ Mr. Malcolm Cowley, incidentally, had remarked on the Restoration touches in the prose of *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me* (*Dial*, July, 1921).—Cf. also Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn: "The Return of the Short Story", N. Y. *Nation*, 1 Mar., 1922.

⁹ For reviews of the verse, cf. § IV of my biblio.

best short stories;" the *Daily News*, examining *Collected Poems* and *Silver Circus*, maintains that the author "is a poet who happens . . . to write much better in prose than in verse;" the *Spectator*, lauding *Collected Poems*,¹⁰ asserts, "Mr. Coppard is as definitely a poet as a short story writer, getting into his verse the same effects of life crystallized with gem-like precision and clarity, the same apparently casual and yet deliberate music, and the same deep compassion and understanding as the finest of his stories show;" and the *Christian Science Monitor*, analyzing *Collected Poems*, agrees (rather beautifully) with the *Daily News*, conceding that "Without question Mr. Coppard is one of the finest living English lyrical poets—but his best poetry is in his short stories. They sing like thrushes and talk with the shrewdness and wisdom of an old man, best when they are shrewd, but good even when they are, like his introduction, jaunty. A less priggish and more delicate writer is hard to find today. He is not even priggish about not being priggish. He has the 'naturalness' of the squirrels that ripple up the larches in his Chiltern woods. He has an instinctive sympathy with all living things and is as alert as an experienced bird. He plays up and down the irresponsible arpeggios of fantasy. He has the sardonic humor, again something like the laughter of a bird, that goes with these qualities . . . [which] are also present in his poetry but, except in a few cases, not with the same freshness and excellence."

What the *London Times Literary Supplement*, finally, says in its reviews of *Fishmonger's Fiddle* and *The Field of Mustard* is also of consequence to every critical-minded lover of Mr. Coppard's poetry in verse form: "He is a true original . . . In definition and color and solid strength his work suggests that of the old Dutch painters . . . [He makes] even the trivial detail quick with life . . . A gate, a tree, an apple, a farmer's cart—these have value not because they perform useful functions but because they are so enchantingly themselves, having each a distinctive and solid shape."¹¹ And again, "Mr. Coppard sees

¹⁰ Cf. Chapman's article, *cit.*, which says that in prose and verse, Mr. Coppard "is essentially a poet," interested in the "recreation of experience."

¹¹ 11 June, 1925.

into the crooked corners of the heart a little derisively, like a troll, but that is his affair. Our affair is that he makes art of what he sees."¹²

—Which permits me to proceed with the purpose I indicated at the beginning of this chapter.

B

1

A careful reader will be quick to notice numerous parallels (whether or not exact ones) between the prose and the verse of Mr. Coppard—parallels, it need hardly be added, involving more than mere characteristics of technique. The tone of colloquial naturalness which Mr. Coppard always aims at (and generally achieves) in his tales is present also in much of the verse, as pieces like "*Pelagea*" and "*The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs*" testify; and that necessity of being "versed in country things" of which I spoke in discussing the verse becomes immediately apparent to any reader who wishes to comprehend the prose in all its varied richness. For this prose is rich—nourishing and full-flavored, as it is at once hardy and gracious: a prose that, in large part, only gains as one re-reads, and—consequently—a prose by which one feels justified in prophesying.—But to adduce my parallels.

For one thing, there appears in the prose that striking pre-occupation with the idea of time of which I have already spoken. To Talakku, in "*The King of the World*", "time seemed to seethe in every channel of his blood;" at Simple Simon, in the tale named for him, "time growled and scratched . . . like a mangy dog;" for Veronica, in "*That Fellow Tolstoy!*", "time swung its silken hammock;" to John Pettigrove, in "*The Handsome Lady*", "it seemed as if time had stabilized and contracted round his heart."¹³ Similarly, there appears that obvious

¹² 18 Nov., 1926.

¹³ Cf. also "Time goes fast—and still there seems no end" ("*The Limping Lady*"); "For a day or two longer time resumed its sweet slow delightfulness" ("*The Black Dog*"); "Time, that impeccable conjurer" ("*Adolf Plumflower*"); "Time smoothed all things" ("*Fine Feathers*"); "A few lilies were white in its black water, and a pile of green reeds were curved as if some weariness of time had bowed them" ("*The Post Office and the Serpent*"); etc.

tendency toward employing inversions, sometimes with doubtful effectiveness, exemplified in expressions like "Manlike was Odd-fellow, beautiful was the lady . . .," "Delicately charming were her face and figure, entrancing were her movements . . .," "Wild it was . . .," " . . . let those hovering tears down fall," and "Intoxicated it was!"—to draw from tales as varied as "The Cat, the Dog, and the Bad Old Dame", "The Fancy Dress Ball", "The Higgler", "Fifty Pounds", and "The Green Drake", respectively.

Further, one notices anew in the prose the occasional use of isolated "so" as an intensive,¹⁴ the presence (though rare) of deliberate grotesquery,¹⁵ the stressing of favorite words¹⁶ (and, on one or two occasions, figures),¹⁷ and the evidence of an exuberant delight in exclamation,¹⁸ as well as in the use of odd (and sometimes onomatopoeic) words.¹⁹—Nor is one ever unconscious of a characteristic, somehow highly individual, originality in the invention of figures.²⁰

But there are parallels of more consequence to be sensed. Thus, when Mrs. Rugby-Fane, in "The Limping Lady", says,

¹⁴ Cf. "banks so moist and green" ("The Green Drake"), "She was so silent for some moments" ("Polly Morgan"), etc.

¹⁵ Cf., e. g., "Around the peak moved soft mounded clouds—like blue buns" ("The Two Wretches").

¹⁶ Cf. "Ah, a lovely day!" ("The Green Drake") "the lovely earth" ("The Field of Mustard"), "Pure and lovely was the world" ("The Idle Frumkin"); "the sweet air" ("The Limping Lady"), "the sweet soil" (*The Hundredth Story* . . .); etc.

¹⁷ Cf., e. g., "the noise of their wings was like showers of rain upon trees" ("The Watercress Girl") and "The sound of all the trotting feet was like a passing shower" ("At Laban's Well"); "the sky . . . streaming with stars" ("The King of the World"), "earth remained all one streaming blackness" ("The Little Mistress"), and "The lime tree in the courtyard streamed with . . . light" ("A Looking-Glass for St. Luke").

¹⁸ Cf. "How bright the day and how the wind blew . . ." ("The Green Drake"), etc.

¹⁹ Cf. "the ruckle of partridges" ("Dusky Ruth"), "stabbed quagmire" ("At Laban's Well"), etc.

²⁰ Thus we are told that a tiger's "tail gradually stiffened out behind it as stealthily as fire moves in the forest undergrowth" ("The Tiger"), that a man "wandered in a thick forest for nights and days like a flea in a great beard" (*The Man from Kilsheelan*), etc. Nor do we seldom come across phrases like that startling one in "The King of the World"—"fear bursting in his eyes".

"All life is a preparation for living the imagined life—that never does begin," one thinks of "Narcissus", with its

"All my life is a rehearsal for something that never takes place;"

when old Jethro, the grave-digger, in "The Handsome Lady", remarks, "Well, it's fate; what is to be must be whether it's good or right, and you can't odds it, you darn't go against it, or you be wrong," one recalls the

"For what is to come comes ever"

of "Pelagea"; when one reads, in "Tanil", that "joy, like truth, lives in the bottom of a well," one finds himself reminded of "The Well", with its

"The bucket falls
From ruthless time to timeless truth that waits—
Perhaps in the bottom of a hidden well;"

when Dan, in "The Poor Man", tells his son Martin, "What you want is courage, and to do the things you've a mind to," one remembers the last line of "The Rogue"—

"Doing the things that I'd a mind to."

And so on. Bits of trivial pseudo-fantasy like "Italian Whirligig" seem natural enough emanating from the mind that could conceive of "Geography on the Jew's Harp"; Harper's reflection in "The Little Mistress" (perhaps a significant key to much of Mr. Coppard's thought)—"The wind blows; upon its unknown course rolls this vast surprising world; how idle is sorrow, how vain is faith, how slight a thing is love"—hints at the philosophy underlying poems as diverse as "Pelagea" and "The Calamity"; a phrase like "the destiny of movement," in *Pink Furniture*, recalls the transposed phraseology of

"So vain is the movement of destiny"

in "To One Unknown and Gone"; the Anglo-Irish idiom of *The Man from Kilsheelan* (which has a preface defending its use), "Marching to Zion", "The Elixir of Youth", and (in some degree) "The Gollan" finds a parallel in the idiom of "The Streams" and "The Tinker"; the sentiments of the war poems—"The Conscript Speaks", "The Glorious Survivors", and "The Obsequies"—have a certain parallel in the implications of tales like "A Three-Handed Reel" (in which Roland Bartlemas, though no coward, deserts from the army—to his eventual doom—simply because war represents for him "the misuse of his life in ways unsought by him and despised") and "Tribute"—the latter a remarkable piece of sardonic writing dealing obviously with the Great War and what it did to one poor family and to one rich one: a piece of art, despite its scornful propaganda.

Less explicit parallels than the foregoing might be suggested by an analysis of Mr. Coppard's distinctive descriptive qualities, apparent in his prose as well as in his verse; or by the comparison of such a tale as "A Looking-Glass for St. Luke"—sentimental in the rather charming fashion of *Immensee* (though seemingly less sincere)—with such a lyric as "The Calamity", since in each of these the restraint of a lover (no matter how imposed) explains why his beloved becomes a bawd. Indeed, it might be possible to reveal a bond—at least in respect of essential type—between the spirit of so wry-mouthed a poem as "The Unfortunate Miller" and the cold tragedy, the spare ballad-quality, of tales like "A Broadsheet Ballad" (in which the sister of a pregnant girl herself pretends to be pregnant, and wins the involved lad as husband on the toss of a coin; eventually, the wronged girl poisons her sister, whose husband is hanged on suspicion!) or "Cotton" (in which Jan Cotton's wife, Ann, cuckolds him with a Spaniard; his suspicions concerning the baby become an assurance when Ann falls ill of a pestilence, and when—himself ill—he finds her dead in bed beside him, he kicks her out, subsequently dying with the child clasped to him).—But these matters are of no more consequence than the fact that Mr. Coppard puts larks and place-names in both his prose and his verse, or that he frequently uses alliteration in both.

Of decided significance, on the contrary, is his concern with

what he calls, in "Fifty Pounds", the "moment of sardonic revelation"; and with what Blackburne, in "Fishmonger's Fiddle", refers to as "man's strange faculty for making an ass of himself". Consequently both the prose and the verse have moments of sardonic cynicism (the record of which sometimes suggests dangerously the startling rather than the true): consequently man becomes, in "The Well",

"Confederate god and everlasting clown,"

while, according to "The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs",

" . . . the world is a mirror in which God sees himself,"

consequently, too, the author is pleased to show (as in "A Looking-Glass for St. Luke") how virtue in one may induce immorality in another, and to leave more than one of his characters in the position of Adolf Plumflower—"with his destiny still before him, and he looking like a fool."—In general, then, it may be maintained that the sardonic qualities of Mr. Coppard's verse are more than matched by similar qualities in his prose.²¹

—Which brings us to a consideration of the "readings of life" in the prose.

2

I have already remarked on the fact that the "readings of life" in Mr. Coppard's verse have for me a certain deliberate—rather

²¹ Cf. "The Cat, the Dog, and the Bad Old Dame", or better still, "The Funnel", in which a man "afraid . . . of life" is kicked out of his home by his young Irish wife, invents a funnel (and sends her the royalties on his invention, as he'd previously sent half his salary), loses his job (though innocent of conscious wrong-doing), comes home on call to find his wife dead and her possessions willed to a purser-lover, and disappears forever. "And"—concludes Mr. Coppard—"that was hasty of him, too hasty, for if he had stayed but a few days longer he would have learned that the purser had been drowned in the sea some little time before."—Or cf., again, that masterpiece called "Judith", in which caste is responsible for a schoolmaster's death; or a curiously unpleasant tale entitled "The Two Wretches", with an ending somehow recalling that of "The Black Dog".—Mr. Coppard seems particularly interested in such questions as the one propounded in "Rifki" (in itself a tale unworthy of his genius): "If flattery is stupid and a lie is evil why are such things so important—and useful?"

than strikingly spontaneous—air; that, in other words, one finds nothing in him to match Mr. Yeats's

"There is enough evil in the crying of wind,"²²

or even Mr. A. E. Housman's grimly sardonic

"Think no more; 'tis only thinking
Lays lads underground."²³

The "readings" of the prose are consistent in general philosophy with those of the verse, but they also have a thought-out quality—one, incidentally, which frequently invites the reflection that Mr. Coppard is being consciously (though none the less delightfully) clever.²⁴—But let me present evidence.

In "The Hurly-Burly" we read, "One can't be wise, one can only be fortunate," though *The Hundredth Story* . . . asserts that "one enjoys all experiences, whether happy or no;" in "Huxley Rustem" we are told that "An egoist is a mystic without a god, but seldom ever without a goddess," that vanity is "the natural and prized, but much-denied, possession of all agreeable people," and that "It is easy, so very easy, to be virtuous when you can't be anything else;" in "The Black Dog" we find that a fool is defined as "one who becomes distracted between the claims of instinct and common sense;" in "The Watercress Girl" we are assured that "Even the most unstable man wishes he had been faithful—but to which woman he is never quite sure;" in *The Hundredth Story* . . . we are informed that "there is an abounding logic in our illusions," and that (another key passage) "The soul of man is like a tree that in autumn is shedding its leaves, the golden fruit of his ideals. O vanity!"—the passage continues—"They fall softly, serenely

²² "He Reproves the Curlew," *The Wind among the Reeds*.

²³ *A Shropshire Lad*, XLIX.

²⁴ Mr. Coppard says (*Biblio.*, *cit.*, p. 24) he cannot understand the basis of any "charge of 'cleverness.'" But it isn't necessary to regard "cleverness" as uniformly cheap in the manner of Oscar Wilde, and a consideration of some of the readings I quote seems to demand the label—a label by which I mean to impute no dishonesty, but merely to indicate a somewhat flippant way of expression.

covering the sweet soil²⁵ until they are trodden by some hoof or scattered by winds. A few lie safe in nooks and crannies—until they rot. But the tree lives on."

And to continue: William Busby says to the drake, in "The Green Drake", "I was born honest, so I shall die poor," and "Force and fudge rule this sinful world;" the sorrowing Dan Pavey, in "The Poor Man", thinks "Courage is vain, . . . we are like the grass underfoot, a blade that excels is quickly shorn. In this sort of a world the poor have no call to be proud, they had only need be penitent;" Daphne says, in "The Birthday Party", ". . . you can't possibly justify the ways of God to women;" the faun tells Toby, in *Pink Furniture*, ". . . nothing lasts for ever. Troubles have their day and even truths must change. Some last a lifetime, others are brief as a kiss." (This latter statement, by the bye, finds a partial parallel in the philosophy of "Pelagea" and in the following extract from "The Martyrdom of Solomon": "Truths have their day, until they are found out; convictions die, no truth lives for ever. Credence is a rolling ball of snow. . . .")

Sometimes the hand of Mr. James Stephens seems to have guided that of Mr. Coppard in framing these "readings".²⁶ consider, for example, the assertions, in "Dumbledon Donkey", that "not even a jackass can evade the hand of destiny for ever" and "The world is full of respectable ladies who cherish a passion for some strange object or another, as likely as not an ass . . .;" or the forester's remark—in *Pink Furniture*—to the effect that "it is not easy to fathom the mind of an ass."

In brief, these comments out of experience, whether serious or humorous, suggest the broodings of a mind that frequently prefers to give light answers to those questions which lurk always in the shadows to threaten the sanity of a thoughtful man—perhaps prefers to do so in unconscious defense of that sanity. Human sympathy aplenty there is; Mr. Coppard scorns no natural—and therefore honest—man; he even has tolerance for fools. And if his work hardly seems to reflect a blissful concep-

²⁵ Cf. "the sweet mould" ("Injunction").

²⁶ As, indeed, the touch of Lord Dunsany is suggested by such a piece as "Tanil," which represents tragedy in the manner of a fairy tale.

tion of the state of marriage, he must nevertheless be granted the honesty of having written, "No woman wants to be sacrificed, least of all those who sacrifice themselves with courage and a quiet mind," in a tale that could never be calculated to make any man take unadulterated pride in his sex;²⁷ as he must be conceded the virtue of humane kindliness, despite the fact that he is apt to wax satirical whenever a parson steps into his pages!²⁸ Consequently, it seems not unreasonable to forgive him for sometimes seeming to accept (albeit cynically, and as a necessary evil) what someone has called the "tradesman morality" of the world; for reminding us that "we frame and bring to life the delusions we desire to cherish, lest in the void of our fancies we decline in pride and the soul faint in the shadow of its being;"²⁹ and for occasionally allowing satire to slide downhill into sarcasm, as when he remarks, in "Faithless Phœbe", that "Nothing succeeds like suspicion. . . ."

3

Any concern with Mr. Coppard's "readings of life" is apt (especially when one needs a transition!) to recall his humor—a humor infinitely varied, now broad and blunt, now delicately capricious; and since humor and poetry draw (at least in my argument, bolstered by such names as "Chaucer" and "Burns") from neighboring, and not wholly dissimilar, springs, a few comments and illustrations seem to be in order.

Mr. Coppard's richest humor flows out of his understanding of character; he is appreciatively amused by many of his creatures, but—to paraphrase an idea from "Pelagea"—he never laughs "maliciously". Consequently we have the incomparable "Poor Bollington"—most innocent of failures as a husband!—and his friend Turner; Aunt Vole,³⁰ who asserts, "A man should settle down, he should settle down and bear his burdens, bear his burdens properly. That's what a burden's for;" the formidable Mrs. Pellegrini³¹ ("Strike me dead if I can see any fun in

²⁷ The masterly "Fifty Pounds."

²⁸ Cf., e. g., "Old Martin."

²⁹ "Fine Feathers."

³⁰ "Fishmonger's Fiddle."

³¹ "The Angel and the Sweep."

funerals!" Mrs. Pellegrini said with finality, taking up her mug."); William Busby,³²—by self-confession "a good bred-un,"—who talks "a green drake with odd ambitions," turned loose on a pond to celebrate its birthday, into confidential approach, and then wrings its neck; and many another. Sometimes the humor is reflected in a description of physical characteristics: thus, "Piffingcap" presents us with one who "was a mere squint of a man, there was such a little bit of him for so much uncomeliness;" "The Cherry Tree" photographs Mrs. Knatchbole, who "was ugly; she had a goitred neck and a sharp skinny nose with an orb shining at its end, constant as grief;" "The Jewel of Jeopardy"—the title recalls *Gawain and the Grene Knight*—introduces Mr. Lanksheer, whose nose "was on terms of ferocious intimacy with his moustache." Again, the humor may lie in a conception that motivates an entire tale (as in the case of "The Elixir of Youth", in which Tom Toole, escaped from the asylum in which he and the "man from Kilsheelan" belong, gets a bottle of the Elixir of Youth from a young woman, waits to share it with an aged friend, and subsequently sees that friend gulp down the entire bottle—and become young so fast that he dwindles away; or in that of "The Devil in the Churchyard", in which a miser has his money buried with him, only to have his poor old brother get it by chance after it's been stolen from his grave), or it may shine through anecdotes like that told by Jethro to Mark in "The Handsome Lady":

"'You don't remember Old Fan as used to clean the church, do you? No, 'twas 'fore you come about these parts. She was a smartish old gal. Bother me if one of they goats didn't follow her into the darn church one day, ah, and wouldn't be drove out on it, neither, no, and she chasing of it from here to there and one place and another but out it would not go, that goat. And at last it act-u-ally marched up into the pulpit and putt its two forelegs on the holy book and said "Baa-a-a!"' Here Jethro gave a prolonged imitation of a goat's cry. 'Well, old Fan had been a bit skeered but she was so overcome by that bit of piety that, darn me, if she didn't sit down and play the organ for it!'"

³² "The Green Drake."

Mr. Coppard's capacity for relishing the humorous aspects of character (in which he occasionally recalls Dickens and Hardy) is, of course, related to his gift for making amusing characterizations in little. There is quite a gallery of these miniatures, a gallery in which are represented folk like Ianthe Forrest (of "Craven Arms"), with "eyes of indiscretion and a mind like a hive of bees, it had such a tiny opening and was so full of a cloying content"; Ann Cotton (of "Cotton"), "a robust managing woman of five-and-thirty, childless, full of desolating cleanliness and kindly tyrannies;" the parents of Maxie Morrisarde (of "Fishmonger's Fiddle")—"a black serge father and a mother full of hymns;" José Ratsel, the "plump American Jewess" of *Count Stefan*, who "ate four pounds of meat a week and talked of her tormented soul;" and the cousin of John Pettigrove's wife, in "The Handsome Lady", "one of those men full of affable disagreements; an attitude rather than an activity of mind."³³ But there are other characters—the lyrically conceived—in Mr. Coppard's prose that invite listing more urgently than these do.

4

By "lyrically conceived characters" I refer to those characters who are so presented as to suggest that they were created in a mood of especially high-hearted exuberance, of unusually delicate spirituality or human naturalness, or of subtly religious ecstasy or surpassing pity. And I think of Mary, the beloved of Michael in "Marching to Zion", whose dream of heavenly love transmutes her earthly love and then translates her to heaven; of Mary McDowall, the tragic, lovely, wronged "Watercress Girl"; of Orianda Crabbe, the charming country lass in "The Black Dog", whose naturalism offends her priggish lover's sense of good breeding until he runs away—like the fool he is; of Caroline Cronshaw, the "Handsome Lady", a widow beloved of John Pettigrove, over whose wife she triumphs amusingly in death;

³³ Cf. also John's wife, whose mind "was a falsetto one;" old Tottel ("The Black Dog"), so "magnificently inane" that he "would have inspired a stork to protest;" Adolf Plumflower (in tale of same name), who "was a person of no casual misfortune, he had sprung a fully armed articulate grievance from the calamity of birth;" Mrs. Lassiter ("Olive and Camilla"), "So young, so beautiful, so trite, there was a fragrant imbecility about her;" *et al.*

of the shy and lovely Mary Sadgrove, in "The Higgler", the tragic idyll of a stupid man and a delicate, silent girl; of the sore-hearted Christine Horan, in *The Man from Kilsheelan*, and the simple and warmly human Rachel Bartlemas (in "A Three-Handed Reel"), whose husband is court-martialled and shot as a deserter from the army; of Maxie and Arnold, in "Fish-monger's Fiddle"—that sad little tale of a girl deserted by her husband yet lacking the strength to give herself up to her lover and get a divorce despite the admonitions of her religious—and absurdly conventional—aunt and uncle. I feel that there was extra warmth, unusual sympathy, in Mr. Coppard's heart when he conceived of these, as I feel what Mrs. Aline Kilmer calls "the touch of tears"³⁴ in his delineation of certain characters of another type.

That type includes a group of unforgettable children, for Mr. Coppard is one of the few authors whose prose glows with rarest poetry when they are dealing with child life. And certainly one could not ask for deeper tenderness, more subtly sympathetic human (and humane) understanding, than is evident in these sketches of children, over most of whom the shadow of tragedy hangs. There is poetry enough—and to spare—in tales like "The Cherry Tree", which testifies to the drudgery with which the author's mother, "Mrs. Flynn", supported her family (as "Pomona's Babe" offers pitiful humor); like "Felix Tincler", the poignant tragedy of a shy, lovely boy who comes to his seventh birthday only to find that his parents have been killed the night before; like "The Poor Man", the pitiful history of a good-hearted man who is jailed for poaching, while his adored illegitimate "Little Martin" is drowned; like "The Presser", the sad record of Mr. Coppard as a sick and hungry boy, working for the Whitechapel tailor; like "Weep Not My Wanton" (in which title Greene returns), a touching picture of drunken rusticity beating a son who pretends the loss of some money he is really preserving for his mother; like "Communion", the account of how a lad slips to church despite his father's wishes, is locked in one night, makes himself at home, and is evicted next

³⁴ "The Touch of Tears," *Vigils*.

morning by an unsympathetic vicar; and like "The Man from the Caravan", with its pathetic brief scene in which a jealous widow comes home and mistreats her attractive little son—only to repent within a moment.—These tales alone would sign to Mr. Coppard's certain immortality for me, but they are not alone in their poetry of character. There are others in which an epic quality merges with the lyrical—tales like "The Tiger", with its picture of Marie Fascota, the circus-woman seduced while she is drunk by Pedersen, the animal-tamer—and its description of the morning fight between the two that ensues in consequence, a fight during which Marie releases a ferocious tiger to revenge herself on her lover; or like "The Field of Mustard", with its memorably elemental three women, vital creatures of the earth, earthy, but one of them at least—Dinah Lock—a "figure against the sky,"³⁵ epic as Hardy's *Tess* is epic.

Mr. Coppard seems to me—in common with many others—never better, never richer in essential poetry, than when he is writing of country folk in country places. True, he preserves in some degree the heritage of Dickens and Hardy, or of the Meredith of *Evan Harrington*, but it is a good heritage to preserve, especially when spiced by an individuality like his own. And he is good even when he is exotic—as in *Count Stefan*, which contains much essentially lyrical prose, in pictures like that of the lovers Peter Pollak and Carinthia James in "a wine garden, near a quarry," or those outlined in passages like the following, which evoke the very genius of a countryside:

" . . . when dusk had fallen . . . sometimes Otto Bartel, a big fat forester with a hoarse voice, who had once emigrated to China, would come up from the village with his mandoline.

" "Well, what do you make of things?" he would enquire huskily. Frau Gruber would not answer him, but she would give him a glass of wine, and Otto Bartel would sit down and play Hungarian love songs, the good Frau crooning sweetly in unison. Carinthia . . . would observe the fireflies floating minutely under the trees, like motes from the Galaxy; or the vast tiara of lights that denoted Vienna beside her darkened Danube . . . "

³⁵ Cf. Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, Book First, VI.

—Which brings us to the matter of Mr. Coppard's lyric prose passages in general, as well as to a few miscellaneous—and concluding—remarks.

5

To think of the lyrical passages in Mr. Coppard's prose is to range mentally over most of his tales. At best, his sentences have a cadence and a rhythm that, without interfering with their idiomatic quality, their colloquial naturalness, give them distinction even in a day when many people write well, however few have very much to say. One after another reveals the fresh lift or the brooding intensity suggestive of lyrical vibrations,—vibrations reflecting the pulse of ecstasy, the sense of wonder, the awareness of "Dark Knowledge", and—withal—the love of life, of the good earth. Thus we read that Lally's sorrow, in "Fifty Pounds", "was a wild cloud that troubled the moon with darkness;" that (in "Marching to Zion") "The wild stars were flowing over the sky;" that (in "The Handsome Lady") "High aloft in the sky thousands of blown rooks wrangled like lost men" (whereupon we suddenly have all of a grey December day in the drowsy hamlet of Tull).

Such passages are numerous. There is that one in "The Trumpeters" recording "the chill rejoicing beauty of the night" on the Irish Sea; another in *Pink Furniture* describing a night-scene in Purganda Harbor ("There was a soft breeze blowing up the wharf wall, a few lights shone on silent ships, a shred of new moon lay aloft in the west, and he could hear black water rolling sleepily past the harbour bar."); another, in "Polly Morgan", telling how Agatha's house "was airily snug and smelt of flowery age; the limes breathed beside it, the furze burgeoned, and the cuckoo cried." —Oppidan, in "The Watercress Girl", "was startled by a flock of starlings that slid across the evening with the steady movement of a cloud; the noise of their wings was like showers of rain upon trees." Old Alice Brady (in the tale named for her) saw "the mild sun airing the wet farms." And so on. In "Dusky Ruth" we are told, "But still there was a god in the sky, . . . his bright hair burning in the pity of the sunsets and tossing in the anger of the dawns." In *The Hun-*

dreadth Story . . . we find much lyricism—in the colorful picture of the gipsy family living near the author's boyhood home, in the enthusiastic lift which marks the description of the South Downs, in the report of the stormy evening when the author watched a blazing ship.—I quote the latter:

"One evening a wet tempest blew, and I wandered down to the sea to watch its great waves. The wind and the waters roared, the rain slewed in gushes along the esplanade where the tall lights glinted on the pavement, leaving a gloss so vivid that the seaward blackness beyond the shore rose like an appalling terrace from chaos to the ridge of eternity. The pier and its pavilion were only half-lit, for the season was late and visitors few, but as the wind swayed I could sometimes hear the music of the band trailing its melancholy airs across the storm."³⁶

Passages like the foregoing emphasize the constant quality of what I have referred to as Mr. Coppard's "pictorial and descriptive" ability. In observation of nature his work suggests consummate accuracy;³⁷ his most likeable characters are always pleased by the simple things, the lyrical moments, of outdoor life, and surely what Hardy wanted said of himself will some day be said of this one also: "He was a man who used to notice such things."³⁸

Once at least does Mr. Coppard's touch in his prose suggest that of Mr. Kenneth Grahame; I refer to the following passage in "The Funnel": ". . . on chill dark nights when the wind seemed to hang in the great trees, he could sometimes faintly hear among their uproar a music, far off, very very far off, thin but just audible, and he would lie in his bed striving to catch that echoing delight . . ."³⁹ More specifically, "this day of all days in the year," in "A Looking-Glass for St. Luke", recalls Poe's *Ulalume*, as "the wind among the reeds," in "The Birthday Party", constitutes, of course, a reference to Mr. Yeats's title. Very rarely indeed does one find a descent to merely pseudo-

³⁶ One recalls Mr. Wilbur Daniel Steele's "The Woman at Seven Brothers"—and the music from the Boston boat.

³⁷ Cf. "The lime tree in the courtyard streamed with the young green light of morning in its leaves" ("A Looking-Glass for St. Luke"), etc.

³⁸ Hardy, "Afterwards", *Collected Poems*.

³⁹ Cf. "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn", *The Wind in the Willows*.

lyricism;⁴⁰ very frequently, on the other hand, does one delight in passages like that in "Purl and Plain"—"The house grew so oppressive in its quiet that when the clock struck eleven the air boomed and oozed with its reverberations," or that in "The Handsome Lady" (when Pettigrove sees that his wife has died)—"Under the violence of his sharpening shock he sank upon the bed beside dead Carrie and a faint crepuscular agony began to gleam over the pensive darkness of his mind, with a promise of mad moonlight to follow,"⁴¹ or that in "The Bogey Man" (a fairy tale in which a certain Sheila is tricked into beauty and seven hundred years of life, though she must wear the devil sleeping in gold on an irremoveable necklace)—"Again Shiloh yawned. Then quietly and most beautifully a bell tinkled one sweet golden note in the room, an echo of enchantment fluting a brief air, a star of sound fallen from a cloud into a cloud."

But one could go on quoting endlessly without exhausting these riches. There is that passage in "Judith" in which Chris awaits the last episode in his assignation with his aristocratic mistress—a passage suggesting all the charm and freshness evoked by that gracious older one in which Chaucer's Criseyde (for Mr. Coppard has more in common with Chaucer than the "C" in his name) listens to the nightingale outside her chamber window; there is that other passage in which "Olive and Camilla" approach reconciliation, that in which Mary McDowall, the "Watercress Girl," washes her hair by "the kitchen fire,"—but why continue?

It should be clear that the poet in Mr. Coppard comes out constantly in his prose (the fantasy of tales like "Piffingcap", "The King of the World", "Adam and Eve and Pinch Me", "The Gollan", "The Bogey Man", and others should alone sufficiently establish this point), even in the very titles of that prose.⁴² And that prose, which—like the verse—testifies to a

⁴⁰ As in "her name it was Mary O'Sullivan" ("Purl and Plain").

⁴¹ This passage illustrates Mr. Coppard's love of alliteration: cf. also "legendary tigers lapped in blood" ("The Tiger"), "the fogs that rose in its unshaken shade were neither sweet nor sour" ("Simple Simon"), "let him die a death like a damned cat in a canal" ("A Wildgoose Chase"), etc.

⁴² Sometimes by exquisite implication: consider "A Little Boy Lost", apparently appropriated from W. H. Hudson's fairy tale or Blake's poem, but used for a tale in which a solitary, apathetic only son is stricken with spinal disease, lies an invalid for seven years, seemingly recovers in some degree, and then takes to his bed—a harmless lunatic.

full-blooded but healthy sensuousness, argues at least concurrence in Synge's ideas of poetry⁴³—in which connection it seems appropriate to recall a remark of Mr. Ben Ray Redman's, in a review of *Fishmonger's Fiddle*:⁴⁴ "he has a *flair* for the ugly, for the revolting; such a *flair* as only those with an acute sense of loveliness can have . . ."

In conclusion—though I am, of course, not here concerned with a full analysis of Mr. Coppard's prose—I would venture to challenge the verdict of occasionally capricious posterity by saying that I have no doubt whatever of this author's eventual position as a teller of tales: his place is in the foremost group, with Marie de France, Chaucer, and the unknown tellers of folk tales and romances now long gone; it is very probably at the head of his contemporaries; and it is conditioned fundamentally by the poetry that is in him. And I close in a mood haunted by certain passages from "The Field of Mustard", that gaunt, elemental tale with the undertone of a witches' dirge in which two women—one with children, one without—talk over life and their love for a gamekeeper until the very feel of the day, the grip of the countryside, takes hold of the listener: "The wind blew strongly athwart the yellow field, and the odour of mustard rushed upon the brooding women. Protestingly the breeze flung itself upon the forest; there was a gliding cry among the rocking pinions as of some lost wave seeking a forgotten shore . . . Again they were quiet, voiceless, and thus in fading light they came to their homes. But how windy, dispossessed and ravaged, roved the darkening world! Clouds were borne frantically across the heavens, as if in a rout of battle, and the lovely earth seemed to sigh in grief at some calamity all unknown to men."

⁴³ Cf. prefatory note to *Poems and Translations*.

⁴⁴ *Saturday Review of Literature*, cit.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

1. A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE POETRY TO JULY, 1931¹

NOTE—I have tried to list the poems in the order of earliest publication, and have abbreviated the titles of volumes as follows: H = *Hips and Haws* (1922); P = *Pelagea and Other Poems* (1926); Y = *Yokohama Garland and Other Poems* (1926); CPe = *Collected Poems*, English edn. (Cape, 1928); CPa = *Collected Poems*, American edn. (Knopf, 1928); PF = *Pink Furniture* (1930). (Thus, CPe 99 = *Coll. Poems*, Eng. edn., p. 99.)

- The Lock²: *Egoist*, June, 1917; H 13; Y 15; CPe 17; CPa 62.
 The Oracle: *Egoist*, June, 1917; H 14; Y 16; CPe 18; CPa 64.
 Eclipse: *Nation* (Lond.), 20 July, 1918; H 15; Y 17; CPe 19; CPa 19.
 Truant: *Nation* (Lond.), 8 Feb., 1919; H 9; Y 11; CPe 13; CPa 93.
 The Way to Tipperary (Entitled "The Irish Road" in *Coterie*): *Coterie*, May, 1919; H 11; Y 13; CPe 15; CPa 84.
 The Obsequies: *Coterie*, May, 1919; H 28; Y 30; CPe 35; CPa 63.
 Summer Night's Rain: *Saturday Westminster*, June, 1919; H 25; Y 27; CPe 32; CPa 44.
 The Sapling: *Voices* (Lond.), Aug., 1919; H 16; Y 18; CPe 21; CPa 70.
 Nocturne: New Moon: *Voices* (Lond.), Aug., 1919; *New Republic*, 27 Jan., 1926; P 14; Y 58; CPe 64; CPa 34.
 The Streams: *Coterie*, Sept., 1919; H 12; Y 14; CPe 16; CPa 74.
 Wishes³: *Coterie*, Sept., 1919.
 The Prodigal Son: *Saturday Westminster*, 20 Sept., 1919; H 44; Y 47; CPe 56; CPa 67.
 The Bride: *Nation* (Lond.), 3 Jan., 1920; H 21; Y 49; CPe 27; CPa 48.
 Country Sabbath⁴: *Chapbook*, Apr., 1920; H 20; Y 22; CPe 25; CPa 13.

¹ This list corrects and extends in some degree those given in the *Bibliography*, *cit.*—I have not been able personally to examine the *Saturday Westminster* versions of "Summer Night's Rain," "The Prodigal Son," "Andante", "Autumn Song", and "Suppliant" (*cf.* note, *Appendix B*); for such dates as have been assigned in these instances I have drawn on the *Bibliography*.

² Printed in *Egoist* with "The Oracle" under heading "Two Poems."

³ Not reprinted by Mr. Coppard; see *Appendix B*.

⁴ Printed in *Chapbook* with "Storm on the Heath" and "A Carol for Margaret Chester" under heading "Three Poems."

- Storm on the Heath: *Chapbook*, Apr., 1920; H 18; Y 20; CPe 23; CPa 42.
 A Carol for Margaret Chester: *Chapbook*, Apr., 1920; H 26; Y 28; CPe 33; CPa 2.
 The Dead Garden: *Voices* (Lond.), May, 1920; H 43; Y 45; CPe 54; CPa 50.
 Dusk: *Voices* (Lond.), Aug., 1920; CPe 109; CPa 18.
 The Two Nude Virgins: *Voices* (Lond.), Aug., 1920; H 34; Y 37; CPe 43; CPa 80.
 Midwinter Night's Dream: *Apple*, Vol. I, No. 3 (1920); H 40; Y 43; CPe 51; CPa 29.
 Andante: *Saturday Westminster*, 11 Sept., 1920; H 24; Y 26; CPe 31; CPa 4.
 The Glorious Survivors: *Voices* (Lond.), Dec., 1920; H 29; Y 31; CPe 36; CPa 52.
 The Horse: *Chapbook*, May, 1921; H 10; Y 12; CPe 14; CPa 54.
 The Antic Shrine: *Spectator*, 23 July, 1921; H 36; Y 38; CPe 46; CPa 45.
 Geography on the Jew's Harp: *English Review*, Aug., 1921; H 22; Y 24; CPe 28; CPa 24.
 Yokohama Garland: *Spectator*, 22 Oct., 1921; H 32; Y 34; CPe 40; CPa 95.
 The Young Man under the Walnut Tree: *London Mercury*, Mar., 1922; H 30; Y 32; CPe 38; CPa 88.
 Simple Day: H 35; Y 36; CPe 45; CPa 40.
 The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs⁵: H 38; Y 40; CPe 48; CPa 55.
 The White Stone: H 42; Y 46; CPe 53; CPa 87.
 To One Unknown and Gone: *Chapbook*, Jan., 1923; P 22; Y 48; CPe 72; CPa 90.
 Night Piece: *Spectator*, 19 May, 1923; P 7; Y 70; CPe 57; CPa 33.
 The Apostate: *Spectator*, 7 July, 1923; P 24; Y 65; CPe 74; CPa 47.
 The Unfortunate Miller: *London Mercury*, Dec., 1923; P 15; Y 56; CPe 65; CPa 82.
 Autumn Song (Entitled "Autumn" in *Yokohama Garland*): *Saturday Westminster*, 8 Dec., 1923; P 26; Y 61; CPe 76; CPa 7.
 Pelagea: *Transatlantic Review*, Jan., 1924; P 18; Y 52; CPe 68; CPa 35.

⁵ Anent the fact that the note of acknowledgment in *Hips and Haws* states that all but two of the poems have had previous publication, whereas the *Bibliography* leaves four unassigned to periodicals, Mr. Coppard writes me as follows (7 July, 1931): "The explanation seems to be that 'The White Stone' had been taken by 'London Mercury' and 'Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs' by Harold Monro for 'The Monthly Chapbook' at the time *Hips and Haws* went to press, but by the time the volume came out both the poems had been returned by the editors, the first because I had refused to alter it, and the second because of the suspension of *Monthly Chapbook*. But I am rather hazy about this, and I am almost sure *Glorious Survivors* appeared somewhere, but I can't recall where."—As a matter of fact, "The Glorious Survivors" appeared in *Voices*, Dec., 1920, as noted above.

- April Fool: *Transatlantic Review*, April, 1924; P 29; Y 51; CPe 78; CPa 6.
- The Little Tempest: *Transatlantic Review*, Apr., 1924; P 32; Y 67; CPe 81; CPa 59.
- Stay, O Stay: *Saturday Review* (Lond.), 20 Sept., 1924; P 8; Y 71; CPe 58; CPa 41.
- The Invisible Rain: *Saturday Review* (Lond.), 20 Dec., 1924; P 23; Y 72; CPe 73; CPa 58.
- The Threshold: *Spectator*, 1 Aug., 1925; P 30; Y 73; CPe 79; CPa 75.
- Curfew: *Spectator*, 7 Nov., 1925; *New Republic*, 20 Oct., 1926; P 13; CPe 63; CPa 17.
- Bereavement: *New Republic*, 23 Dec., 1925; CPe 101; CPa 8.
- Christmas Apples (Entitled "Christmas Eve" in *Yokohama Garland* and periodical versions): *New Republic*, 23 Dec., 1925; *London Mercury*, Aug., 1926; P 28; Y 50; CPe 77; CPa 11.
- Flesh and Blood (Entitled "The Shadow" in *New Republic*): *New Republic*, 23 Dec., 1925; P 40; CPe 89; CPa 22.
- The Tinker: *New Republic*, 23 Dec., 1925; *Country Life* (Lond.), 4 Sept., 1926; P 12; Y 66; CPe 62; CPa 77.
- Epitaph: *New Republic*, 23 Dec., 1925; P 44; CPe 93; CPa 21.
- Winter Field: *New Republic*, 24 Feb., 1926; *London Mercury*, Aug., 1926; P 9; Y 75; CPe 59; CPa 94.
- Betty Perrin: *New Republic*, 26 May, 1926; P 35; CPe 84; CPa 9.
- Mendacity: *London Mercury*, Aug., 1926; P 37; Y 64; CPe 86; CPa 28.
- Quiet (Entitled "Feb. 20, 1924" in *Yokohama Garland*): *London Mercury*, Aug., 1926; P 25; Y 23; CPe 75; CPa 39.
- The Sluggard: *New Republic*, 6 Oct., 1926; P 38; CPe 87; CPa 72.
- The Well: P 10; Y 62; CPe 60; CPa 85.
- Narcissus: P 42; CPe 91; CPa 31.
- The Rogue: Y 59; CPe 98; CPa 69.
- Suppliant?: *Saturday Westminster*, ;Y 60.
- Injunction: *Spectator*, 11 Aug., 1928; CPe 20; CPa 27.
- Complaint of Time: *Spectator*, 11 Aug., 1928; *New Republic*, 3 Oct., 1928; CPe 102; CPa 12.
- The Plover: *New Republic*, 10 Oct., 1928; CPe 106; CPa 66.
- To Winter: *Spectator*, 27 Oct., 1928; CPe 107; CPa 91.
- A Calamity (Entitled "The Calamity" in Knopf edn. of *Coll. Poems*⁶): CPe 99; CPa 1.

⁶ Printed in *Transatlantic Review* with "The Little Tempest" under heading "Two Poems".

⁷ See *Appendix B* for reprint.

⁸ Mr. Coppard remarks (Letter, 7 July, 1931): "In point of fact I'd prefer it without the article at all."

April: CPe 94; CPa 5.

Crazy Girl's Song: CPe 104; CPa 15.

The Conscript Speaks: CPe 97; CPa 49.

The Phoenix: CPe 103; CPa 65.

The Return: CPe 100; CPa 68.

The Troubadour: CPe 95; CPa 78.

Forester's Song: *Spectator*, 18 Jan., 1930; *New Republic*, 22 Jan., 1930; PF 47.

The Trick of Change: *New Republic*, 29 Jan., 1930.

A Lover: *Spectator*, 1 Feb., 1930; *New Republic*, 9 Apr., 1930.

Harpy and Hunter: *New Republic*, 12 Mar., 1930; PF 141.

NOTE: *Pink Furniture* contains a good deal of verse—good, bad, and indifferent—other than the two specimens listed above as having seen periodical publication; for reasons which should be obvious to anyone who has read my comments in Footnote 86 of *The Poetry*, I have not thought it necessary to include this material in my bibliography.—In "The Poor Man", a tale in *The Black Dog*, may also be found a sprightly ballad ("Timmie"), as well as an amusing bit of doggerel ("Our parson loves his motor car").

2. DATES OF COMPOSITION OF POEMS¹

1906: Injunction

1912 (*or later*): The Return

1915: The Conscript Speaks
Nocturne: New Moon

1916: The Oracle
Wishes (*circa*)
Country Sabbath
The Tinker (*Sept.*)
The Lock (*Nov.*)

1917: The Way to Tipperary (The Irish Road)
The Obsequies
The Streams
The Bride
Dusk
The Two Nude Virgins

¹ In a letter of 25 Sept., 1931, Mr. Coppard remarks, "In a few cases I am doubtful of the exact year but on the whole the list is substantially correct . . ."

- 1918: Eclipse
 Truant
 The Sapling
 The Horse
 Suppliant
- 1919: The Prodigal Son (*June*)
 Geography on the Jew's Harp (*June*)
 Summer Night's Rain
 The Dead Garden
 A Carol for Margaret Chester
 To One Unknown and Gone
- 1920: Storm on the Heath (*Jan.*)
 Andante (*Aug.*)
 The Glorious Survivors
 The Antic Shrine
 Yokohama Garland
 Crazy Girl's Song
 The Young Man under the Walnut Tree
 Midwinter Night's Dream
- 1921: Simple Day
 The White Stone
 The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs
- 1922: Night Piece
 The Apostate
- 1923: The Unfortunate Miller
 Autumn Song (*Autumn*)
 Pelagea
 April Fool
 The Little Tempest
 The Well
- 1924: Stay, O Stay
 The Invisible Rain
 Bereavement
 Christmas Apples (*Christmas Eve*)
 Flesh and Blood (*The Shadow*)

Mendacity
 Quiet (Feb. 20, 1924)
 The Trick of Change (*circa*)

1925: The Threshold
 Curfew
 Epitaph
 Winter Field
 Betty Perrin
 The Rogue
 A Calamity (The Calamity)
 The Troubadour

1926: The Sluggard (*May*)
 Narcissus
 April
 The Phoenix

1928: To Winter
 Complaint of Time
 The Plover

1929: Forester's Song
 Harpy and Hunter
 A Lover

APPENDIX B

1. COLLATION OF TEXTS OF POEMS (PERIODICALS AND VOLUMES)

a. *Collected Poems*

NOTE—Because it happened to be most convenient to do so when I made this collation, I have used the American edition of *Collected Poems* as a basis for making comparative references. All the printed versions¹ of Mr. Coppard's poems, then, may be assumed to correspond exactly with the versions given in *Collected Poems* (N. Y., Knopf, 1928) except as indicated below. It may be remarked that the American practice in using quotation marks is

¹ For which see *Appendix A*.

followed in *Yokohama Garland*, *London Mercury*, *Transatlantic Review*, *Chapbook*, and *New Republic* versions; in all other versions the English practice is followed.

The Calamity—Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

Version entitled "A Calamity"²

L. 9: Apostrophe in "tho"

L. 12: No accent-mark

L. 19: No ,

A Carol for Margaret Chester—*Chapbook*:

Cf. notes on "Country Sabbath"

L. 1 has , for . (*Hips and Haws*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 3 reads "*Dong ding*" for "Ding dong"

L. 4 has , for . (*Hips and Haws*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 5 has . for , (*Hips and Haws*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 38 capitalizes "dawn" and ends with,

L. 39 reads "*dong ding*" for "*ding dong*" (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 40 ends with , (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Ll. 42, 43, and 44 have commas in place of periods (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Hips and Haws:

L. 3 has "*Ding Dong*" for "Ding dong" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 3: "*Ding dong*" is italicized

L. 12 has , for .

L. 20 has , for .

L. 39 has . for ,

(Only the Amer. edn. of *Coll. Poems* sets off Stanza 4 in decorative devices.)

Andante³—*Hips and Haws*:

L. 3 lacks , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 13 is followed by stanzaic break (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 3 reverses accent on "drownèd"

² But cf. note on this title, *Appendix A*.

³ Incompletely collated; *Saturday Westminster* version not available to me.

April—Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 5 reads "on" for "so"

L. 6 reads "but still the sky" for "but the far sky"

April Fool—*Transatlantic Review*:

Version pub. with "The Little Tempest" under heading "Two Poems"

L. 1 ends with , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 7 reads "There now" for "For now"

L. 12 lacks , and hyphenates "ever dead" (*Pelagea*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

L. 18 hyphenates "Soft smiling"

Autumn Song⁴—*Pelagea*:

L. 19 has "acold" for "a-cold" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

Version entitled "Autumn"

L. 3 reads "to the" for "all her"

Last line of first stanza (only) set back in alignment with Ll. 2 and 4

L. 13 has "faggot" for "fagot"

L. 19 ends with , and has , after "ardours"

Bereavement—*New Republic*:

Ll. 10 and 16 read "Her bonds were lightly worn" for "Her vows were lightly borne"

Last five lines read

"And bitterness succeeds,
Man's love is past ordaining,
A gilt cock ever vaning:
Ah, foolish now complaining
Her bonds were lightly worn!"

for

"And bitterness succeeds
Sharp as that knell proclaiming
She too our oath was staining:
Ah foolish, now, complaining
Her vows were lightly borne!"

Betty Perrin—*New Republic*:

L. 1 ends with ,

L. 18 lacks —

L. 42: "'ayont" is spelled "'ayond" (*Pelagea*, do.)

⁴Incompletely collated; *Saturday Westminster* version not available to me.

Christmas Apples—*New Republic*, *London Mercury*, and *Yokohama Garland* versions entitled "Christmas Eve"

New Republic:

L. 2 reads "near December's end" for "at December's end"

L. 10: Quotation marks erroneously omitted before "I like . . ."

Yokohama Garland:

Opening lines read

"There was an old and friendly man
Who brought as the chimes began"

for

"I had an old man to my friend
Who gave me, at December's end,"

Complaint of Time—Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 11 has, after "sleep"

Country Sabbath—*Chapbook*:

Version published with "Storm on the Heath" and "A Carol for Margaret Chester" under heading "Three Poems"

L. 12 has, after "road" (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.) and after "uncomely"

L. 18 ends with ,

Hips and Haws:

L. 13 lacks, (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 17 erroneously reads "women loiter" for "woman loiters"⁵

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 4 has, for :

L. 5 has ; for ,

L. 11 lacks ,

Crazy Girl's Song—Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

No italics whatsoever

L. 13 reads "was" for "is"

L. 20 ends with , and omits -

Curfew—*Pelagia*:

L. 6 of each stanza indented in alignment with Ll. 2 and 4

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 6, Stanza 1, ends with . (Obvious error)

Dusk—Versions agree

Eclipse—*Nation*:

Version signed "A. Coppard"

No stanzaic break between Ll. 1 and 2 (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 7 reads "the" for "a"

⁵ Cf. *Bibliography*, *cit.*, p. 44.

L. 10 has — for , (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 13 has — for :

L. 14 has , for —

L. 17 has , for ;

L. 19 has “honeyed” for “honied”

Hips and Haws:

L. 14 has , preceding — (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 15 has , preceding — (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

No break in alignment between L. 1 and rest of poem

Epitaph—*New Republic:*

L. 1 omits “are” (*Pelagea*, do.)

L. 2 reads “And gold’s” for “Like gold” (*Pelagea*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

L. 11 has “naught” for “nought”

Flesh and Blood—*New Republic:*

Version entitled “The Shadow”

L. 8 reads “The dream” for “Each dream”

L. 17 has , after “Yet”

L. 20 (which is not indented) ends with .

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

Last line erroneously reads “My shadows follows me.”

Geography on the Jew’s Harp—Versions in *English Review*, *Hips and Haws*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems* all have a stanzaic break after L. 44 and omit , after “O” in L. 39

English Review:

L. 33 reads “For” for “Nor” (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 47 reads “or” for “nor”

L. 52 omits , after “world”

L. 57 has : for ; (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

L. 32 ends with ,

L. 35 reads “those” for “these”

Injunction—*Spectator:*

Last line lacks ,

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

L. 2 ends with ,

Mendacity—All versions save that in Amer. edn., *Coll. Poems*, have— properly
—a stanzaic break after L. 8

London Mercury:

L. 4 has . for ; (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

- L. 14 reads "Outpall" for "Outpoll"
- L. 18 reads "Dare" for "Dares" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)
- L. 20 reads "'Tis" for "'Tis"
- L. 22 has , for :
- L. 23 lacks , (*Pelagea*, do.)

Pelagea:

- Ll. 10 and 13 read "lovers" for "lovers'" (Obvious error)
- L. 20 reads "'Tis" for "'Tis"

Yokohama Garland:

- L. 1 has — for ,
- L. 2 has . for :
- Ll. 9 and 10 read

"Happy love when truth accords!
Happy truth in lovers' words!"

for

"Happy truth when truth accords
With the love in lovers' words!"

Ll. 13-16 read

"Men must love, yet men do lie
Till their stars fall from the sky,
But though fallen seven times seven
Love will pin them back in heaven."

for

"Men must love, though lovers' lies
Outpoll the stars in florid skies,
And none may keep, and few can merit,
The fond joy that they inherit."

- L. 19 lacks , after "Believe it"
- L. 20 has ; for . and reads "'Tis a love" for "'Tis a lore"
- L. 21 lacks both - and ,
- L. 22 has . for :

Eng. edn., Coll. Poems:

- L. 5 ends with ,
- L. 22 has ; for :

Midwinter Night's Dream—Apple:

- L. 7 lacks accent on "whelmèd"
- L. 16 has ! for .
- L. 26 is followed by stanzaic break
- L. 31 is followed by stanzaic break
- L. 36 reads "Oh" for "O"
- L. 42 has "Tis" for "'Tis" (*Hips and Haws*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 7 ends with ,

L. 33 has , for ;

L. 43 ends with ,

Narcissus—*Pelagea*:

L. 14 has — for , after "another's"

End. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 25 has , for .

Night Piece—*Spectator*:

In L. 8 "time's" is spelled with capital (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Nocturne: New Moon—*Voices*:

L. 1 has – in "tonight" (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 14 ends with , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 16 reads "With a hum like" for "With the cry of"

L. 18 has , for !

Poem concludes with

"And how in the galaxy clings
The dust of her lovely wings!"

instead of

"How fair the galaxy swings
In the dust of her lovely wings!"

New Republic:

L. 12 reads "thorough" for "through" (*Pelagea*, do.)

L. 15 omits "u" from "laboured"

Yokohama Garland:

L. 8 reads "And in the" for "And the"

L. 9 reads "There is a woe" for "Is full of a woe"

L. 11 reads "Who will sigh" for "Who sighs"

L. 12 is not followed by stanzaic break

L. 20 has . for !

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 5 ends with ,

Pelagea—*Transatlantic Review*:

L. 1 has ; for :

L. 2 has : for final ,

L. 3 has , for ; and lacks final , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 4 lacks , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 17 reads "their" for "the"

L. 40 lacks , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 45 reads "But" for "For" (*Pelagea* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

No stanzaic break follows L. 49

- L. 59 has ; for . (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)
- L. 73 lacks , (*Pelagea* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)
- L. 92 has ; for final ,
- L. 93 omits "For" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.) and has , for ;
- L. 94 omits "u" from "behaviour"
- L. 98 is followed by four lines reading

"And tides flow, and the great sea sing.
And still, so late, the carpenter is knocking,
So late, so late,
And the cat in the darkness mews and mews and mews."

(All other versions have five lines in place of the four just quoted.—

Cf. Amer. edn., *Coll. Poems*.)

Pelagea:

- L. 91 is followed by stanzaic break (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

- L. 2 has ; for final ,
- L. 5 omits "Is"
- L. 8 reads "To build Pelagea's house" for "For Pelagea's house"
- L. 17 reads "his" for "the"
- L. 18 lacks , after "old"
- L. 39 has ; for :
- L. 53 reads "Where Pelagea sits blowing a dull fire," for "Where Pelagea blows a dying fire,"
- L. 69 lacks ,
- L. 85 reads "As" for "And"
- L. 100 lacks ,

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

- L. 16 lacks final ,
- L. 17 ends with ,
- L. 60 ends with ,
- L. 83 hyphenates "Tonight"

Quiet—*London Mercury:*

- L. 1 has - in "tonight" (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)
- L. 7 ends with ,
- L. 14 omits - from "long-stemmed" (*Pelagea*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

Version entitled "Feb. 20, 1924"

- L. 1 has , for ;
- L. 2 has : for — and reads "on" for "in"
- L. 3 has , for —

- L. 6 has — for ,
- L. 7 ends with ,
- L. 17 reads "heavens'" for "heaven's"
- Concluding lines printed

"Was lulled, the leafy tongues
Were still."

instead of

"Was lulled,
The leafy tongues
Were still."

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

- L. 7 has - in "hourglass"

Simple Day—*Hips and Haws*:

- L. 1 ends with , (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)
- L. 7 has : for , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)
- L. 11 misprints "conch" as "couch"⁶

Stay, O Stay—*Saturday Review* version reverses accent on "designèd" (L. 1)

Storm on the Heath—*Chapbook*:

Cf. notes on "Country Sabbath"

- L. 6 ends with ,
- L. 33 has - in "Tomorrow" (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

- L. 8 lacks ,
- L. 9 lacks , and reads "rigid" for "unrigid"
- L. 13 ends with ,

Summer Night's Rain?—*Hips and Haws*:

- L. 10 reads "That" for "They" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

The Antic Shrine—*Spectator*:

- L. 5 reads "Pearls without price . . ." for "Those pearls without price . . ."
- L. 9 omits - from "may-tree"
- L. 12 reads "charmèd" for "charmed"
- L. 13 reads "The thickets bud again in these charmèd airs," for "The thickets bud again"
- L. 14 reads "blossom" for "blossoms" (*Hips and Haws*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)
- L. 15 omits :

⁶ Cf. *Bibliography*, cit., p. 44.

⁷ Incompletely collated; *Saturday Westminster* version not available to me.

L. 16 reads "My banished thoughts, confuting," for "My banished thoughts confuting me"

L. 21 reads "And hope's veiled . . ." for "Hope's veiled . . ."

L. 26 ends with ,

L. 32 ends with ,

L. 33 has . for , (*Hips and Haws, Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

No stanzaic break after L. 31 (*Hips and Haws?*—Last four lines stand alone on a page.)

The Apostate—*Spectator*:

L. 10 has , after "O" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 15 reads "And" for "But" (*Pelagea and Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

L. 13 omits , after "Farewell"

The Bride—*Nation*:

L. 3 has — for ,

L. 4 has , for —

L. 20 has "instal" for "install" (*Hips and Haws, Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 22 has . for , (*Hips and Haws and Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Hips and Haws:

L. 5 misprints "vesture" as "venture"⁸

L. 6 omits - from "snow-white" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 22 has ; for ,

The Conscript Speaks—Versions agree

The Dead Garden—*Voices*:

L. 5 has , for ;

L. 6 reads "And wise-mouthed birds" for "Wise-mouthed birds"

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

Ll. 24 and 25 end with ,

The Glorious Survivors—*Voices*:

L. 21 omits - from "collar-studs" (*Hips and Haws and Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 5 has ; for ,

The Horse—*Chapbook*:

L. 7 reads "And cons" for "To con"

⁸ Cf. *Bibliography*, cit., p. 44.

L. 12 of Amer. edn., *Coll. Poems* ("The wind tosses the husks in yellow rain to the sky,"), stands as two lines reading

"The wind tosses the husks in yellow rain
Against the sky,"

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

Last line has hyphens in "today" and "tomorrow"

The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs—*Hips and Haws*:

L. 42 has "ecstacies" for "ecstasies"

L. 50 is punctuated only with commas after "truth" and "love" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 59 misprints "self-same place" as "self place"⁹

Yokohama Garland:

L. 59 prints "self-same" as "selfsame" (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 37 has ; for .

L. 50 omits , after "ease" and changes ; after "truth" to ,

The Invisible Rain—*Saturday Review*:

L. 7 reads "Falling" for "Falls" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 8 omits "And" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 9 reads "And" for "That"

L. 13 reads "I read in the book of pride, and wisdom, and destiny," for
"In the book I read of pride, and wisdom, and destiny," (*Pelagea* and
Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

L. 13 reads "I read in my book about pride and wisdom and destiny,"

The Little Tempest—NOTE: The last line of the version in the Amer. edn. of *Coll. Poems* should properly stand as L. 56 (following the last line on p. 60), as it does in all other versions.¹⁰

Transatlantic Review:

Cf. notes on "April Fool"

L. 16 has "Longlastingly" for "Long-lastingly" (*Pelagea*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 17 has ; for : (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 20 has "Hambleden" for "Hambledon" (*Pelagea*, do.)

L. 22 has . for ,

L. 24 lacks .

L. 29 lacks - (*Pelagea* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

⁹ Cf. *Bibliography*, cit., p. 44.

¹⁰ Cf. *Bibliography*, cit., p. 51.

L. 41 is followed by stanzaic break (*Pelagea* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 46 has, for . (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 48 reads "Not" for "Nor" (*Pelagea*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 58 (Amer. edn., *Coll. Poems*; properly, L. 59) has "Hambleden" for "Hambledon" (*Pelagea* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Pelagea:

L. 15 reads "is a pleasure" for "is pleasure"

Yokohama Garland:

L. 14 lacks,

L. 20 reads "In Hambleden Vale the brooks" for "In Hambledon Vale brooks"

L. 25 lacks final ,

Ll. 27 and 48 are followed by stanzaic breaks

There is no stanzaic break between Ll. 32 and 33

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 11 has, after "nudged"

L. 43 has, for .

L. 50 lacks final ,

The Lock—*Egoist*:

Version pub. with "The Oracle" under heading "Two Poems"

L. 5 lacks ,

L. 9 has ; for ,

L. 10 ends with ,

L. 11 has — for ,

L. 13 reads "wound" for "wounds"

L. 15 ends with ,

L. 16 has . for ,

L. 21 lacks, (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.) and has "Tho'" for "Though"

Hips and Haws:

L. 1 is followed by stanzaic break (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 16¹¹ lacks, (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 6 has, for :

The Obsequies / 1917—*Coterie*:

Version undated (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

¹¹ Mr. Coppard says (*Bibliography*, cit., p. 44): "Page 13, line 16, wants a full stop."

L. 1 ends with , (*Hips and Haws*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 9 reads "dreadful" for "shocking"

(L. 17: Final , incomplete)

Hips and Haws:

L. 13 has "wreathes" for "wreaths" (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 14 lacks , after "quickly" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

The Oracle—*Egoist*:

Cf. notes on "The Lock"

L. 2 has . for ;

L. 5 has ; for ,

Ll. 8 and 9 read

"A golden-breasted dove, the yellow moon, sits in the elm
Confronting me."

for

"A golden-breasted dove, the yellow moon,
Sits in the elm confronting me."

(*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Hips and Haws:

L. 2 has . for ; (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

L. 1 lacks ,

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 10 ends with ,

The Phoenix—Versions agree

The Plover—*New Republic*:

L. 6 omits , (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

The Prodigal Son¹²—*Hips and Haws*:

L. 2, like L. 24, omits - from "good-bye" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.) and,
further, has . for ,¹³

L. 20 reads "otherwhere" for "otherwise" (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng.
edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.: "otherwise" appears to be an obvious misprint.)

End. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 13 has "Naught" for "Nought"

The Return—Versions agree

The Rogue—*Yokohama Garland*:

L. 3 has : for ,

¹² Incompletely collated; *Saturday Westminster* version not available to me.

¹³ Mr. Coppard says L. 2 should end with comma. (*Bibliography*, cit., p. 44)

L. 4 reads "He" for "he"

Second stanza reads

"But I learned of joys that you are blind to,
And did the things that I'd a mind to:
Pay my delinquencies no heed—
The unrecked flower will yield no seed."

for

"Pay my delinquencies no heed,
You may not do the things I did,
For I learned of joys the nice are blind to,
And did the things that I'd a mind to."

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

L. 2 has "naught" for "nought"

L. 7 reads "wise" for "nice"

L. 8 reads "Doing" for "And did"

The Sapling—*Voices*:

Version dedicated "To A. E. G."

L. 2 reads "boughs" for "branches" (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.) and ends with , (*Hips and Haws*, *Yokohama Garland*, and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.: the , in the Amer. edn. of *Coll. Poems*—if one is intended—is very faint and fragmentary.)

L. 5 reads "them" for "it" (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 10 italicizes "not"

L. 12: , incomplete?

L. 17 has , for — (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Ll. 19 and 21 lack ,

L. 22 has , for — (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

L. 35 reads "drop" for "fall" (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Hips and Haws and *Yokohama Garland* versions dedicated "To Agnes G. Evans"

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

Ll. 14 and 16 end with ,

The Sluggard—*New Republic*:

L. 5 ends with , (*Pelagea* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 13 has , for ;

L. 14 has , for ;

L. 16 omits ,

L. 24 has "coloring" for "colouring"

Pelagea:

L. 26 has "bloodred" for "blood-red"

Ll. 38 and 41 have "Goodbye" for "Good-bye"

The Streams—Coterie:

- L. 1 ends with , (*Hips and Haws, Yokohama Garland, and Eng. edn., Coll. Poems, do.*)
- L. 2 has : for ;
- L. 5 lacks ,
- L. 11 reads "When the door and the half-door are bolted," for "The door and the half-door bolted,"
- L. 12 has — for :
- L. 15 has — for :

Hips and Haws:

- L. 11 omits - from "half-door" (*Yokohama Garland and Eng. edn., Coll. Poems, do.*)

The Threshold—Spectator:

- L. 11 has "Veinéd" for "Veined" (*Yokohama Garland, do.*)
- L. 16 has ; for , (*Yokohama Garland, do.*)
- L. 38 omits , (*Pelagea, Yokohama Garland, and Eng. edn., Coll. Poems, do.*)

Yokohama Garland:

- L. 31 has "Youth" for "youth"

Eng. edn., Coll. Poems:

- L. 7 has "Plum-tree" for "Plum tree"

The Tinker—Country Life:

- L. 3 has , for ; (*New Republic, Pelagea, and Yokohama Garland, do.*)
- L. 4 reads "With" for "There is" (*New Republic, Pelagea, and Yokohama Garland, do.*)
- L. 5 has , after "For"
- L. 8 (as it obviously should) ends with . (*New Republic, Pelagea, Yokohama Garland, and Eng. edn., Coll. Poems, do.*)
- L. 9 reads "there" for "here" (*New Republic and Yokohama Garland, do.*)

Yokohama Garland:

- L. 2 reads "It's" for "That is"

*The Troubadour—Versions agree**The Two Nude Virgins—Hips and Haws:*

- No stanzaic break between Ll. 19 and 20 (*Yokohama Garland, do.*)

Eng. edn., Coll. Poems:

- L. 13 has , for .

The Unfortunate Miller—London Mercury:

- L. 9 has , after "help" (*Yokohama Garland and Eng. edn., Coll. Poems, do.*)
- L. 18 has "gelt" for "gilt" (*Yokohama Garland, do.*)
- L. 33 reads "a glass" for "the glass" (*Yokohama Garland, do.*)
- L. 34 reads "So" for "How" (*Pelagea and Yokohama Garland, do.*)

L. 47 reads "And the sails and the miller dying" for "And the sails, with the miller dying,"

Yokohama Garland:

L. 23 reads "but it pours" for "but pours"

L. 47 omits commas

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

L. 26 has , after "alas"

The Way to Tipperary—*Coterie:*

Version entitled "The Irish Road"

L. 2 reads "Undriven nor bereft" for "Undriven, unbereft"

L. 5 has , for ;

L. 17 has , for —

L. 19 reads "Is the lot of a man this only—for ever" for "Is the lot of a man this only for ever:"

L. 21 lacks ,

Hips and Haws:

L. 3 has ! for ? (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Ll. 20 and 22 have "goodbye" for "good-bye" (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

The Well—*Yokohama Garland:*

L. 19 has . for ;

L. 26 has ; for :

L. 42 has . for ,

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

L. 1 ends with . (Obvious error)

L. 38 ends with ,

L. 40 has , after "Drops"

The White Stone—*Hips and Haws:*

L. 10 lacks , (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

L. 18 lacks , after "coney" (*Yokohama Garland* and Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

The Young Man under the Walnut Tree—*London Mercury:*

Uses - in "walnut tree" (title and L. 1)

L. 3 omits "n" from "green" (Obvious misprint)

L. 24 lacks , after "dust"

L. 29 ends with ,

L. 34 has ; for ,

L. 35 reads "You who are full of love" for "For you are full of love"

L. 37 lacks , after "honour"

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems:*

L. 6 has , for .

To One Unknown and Gone—*Chapbook:*

- L. 6 lacks , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)
- L. 7 lacks , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)
- L. 10 ends with , (*Yokohama Garland*, do.)

Yokohama Garland:

- L. 5 has : for ;

To Winter—*Spectator*:

- L. 15 omits - in "new-comer"
- L. 18 reads "our" for "her" (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)
- L. 25 has "When as" for "Whenas"
- L. 46 has ; for :

Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*:

- L. 38 has "Naught" for "Nought"
- L. 43 has , after "sleep"

Truant—*Nation*:

- L. 1 ends with ,
- L. 14 has "ecstasy" for "ecstasy" (*Hips and Haws*, do.)

Winter Field—Versions agree , though in *Yokohama Garland* there is no line-indentation

Yokohama Garland—*Spectator*:

- L. 12 has , after "love" (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)
- L. 13 has , after "not"
- L. 19 ends with ,
- L. 20 has "apophthegms" for "apothegms"
- L. 23 has "Though" for "Tho"

There is no stanzaic break after L. 37 (Eng. edn., *Coll. Poems*, do.)

A line ("Or a flaring oven to scorch this crawling orb,"), since deleted, stands between what are L1. 45 and 46 in the Amer. edn. of *Coll. Poems* (*Hips and Haws* and *Yokohama Garland*, do.)

- L. 47 (Amer. edn., *Coll. Poems*; L. 48, *Spectator*) ends with,
- Last four lines stand as separate stanza

Hips and Haws:

- L. 46 (Amer. edn., *Coll. Poems*; L. 47, *Hips and Haws*) misprints "in its chalice" as "in chalice"¹⁴

b. "Suppliant" (*Yokohama Garland*)

The *Saturday Westminster* version of this poem has not been available to me. Mr. Coppard remarks (in a letter of 7 July, 1931): "Sorry I can't tell when it [*i. e.*, the poem] appeared. The version in *Yoko Gar* probably differs a little as it always dissatisfied me—I was bogged in the sonnet form always!"—For a reprint of the *Yokohama Garland* version, see section 3 of this *Appendix*.

¹⁴ Cf. *Bibliography*, *cit.*, p. 44.

c. Verse from *Pink Furniture*, and Uncollected Pieces

Forester's Song—*New Republic*:

L. 1 of Stanza 2 has . for ,

(The *New Republic* and *Spectator* versions , of course, are printed without quotation marks; the *Pink Furniture* version —pp. 47-8—lacks a title.)

Harpy and Hunter—*New Republic* version, naturally, omits quotation marks, and has . for ! after last line of Stanza 2; *Pink Furniture* version—pp. 141-2—lacks a title.

Wishes—One version: cf. § 4 of this *Appendix*.

The Trick of Change—One version (*New Republic*): cf., above, § II ("The Poetry"), for reprint.

A Lover—Two versions (*New Republic* and *Spectator*): cf., above, § II ("The Poetry"), for reprint of *New Republic* version.

Spectator version differs from that in *New Republic* in these respects:

L. 2 has , for ;

L. 8 reads "Rove" for "Move"

L. 12 has "lovers" for "lover's" (the former an obvious misprint)

Stanza 5 reads

"Time takes its triumph,
The web is spun,
But I keep my vision
Of every one;"

for

"Now time has triumphed
And my loves are gone,
I keep my vision
Of every one;"

2. CONTENTS OF THE SEPARATE VOLUMES

Hips and Haws

Truant

The Horse

The Way to Tipperary

The Streams

The Lock

The Oracle

Eclipse

The Sapling
Storm on the Heath
Country Sabbath
The Bride
Geography on the Jew's Harp
Andante
Summer Night's Rain
A Carol for Margaret Chester
The Obsequies
The Glorious Survivors
The Young Man under the Walnut Tree
Yokohama Garland
The Two Nude Virgins
Simple Day
The Antic Shrine
The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs
Midwinter Night's Dream
The White Stone
The Dead Garden
The Prodigal Son

Pelagea and Other Poems

Night Piece
Stay, O Stay
Winter Field
The Well
The Tinker
Curfew
Nocturne: New Moon
The Unfortunate Miller
Pelagea
To One Unknown and Gone
The Invisible Rain
The Apostate
Quiet
Autumn Song
Christmas Apples
April Fool
The Threshold
The Little Tempest
Betty Perrin

Mendacity
The Sluggard
Flesh and Blood
Narcissus
Epitaph

Yokohama Garland and Other Poems

Truant
The Horse
The Way to Tipperary
The Streams
The Lock
The Oracle
Eclipse
The Sapling
Storm on the Heath
Country Sabbath
Feb. 20, 1924 [*i. e.*, "Quiet"]
Geography on the Jew's Harp
Andante
Summer Night's Rain
A Carol for Margaret Chester
The Obsequies
The Glorious Survivors
The Young Man under the Walnut Tree
Yokohama Garland
Simple Day
The Two Nude Virgins
The Antic Shrine
The Innkeeper's Handkerchiefs
Midwinter Night's Dream
The Dead Garden
The White Stone
The Prodigal Son
To One Unknown and Gone
The Bride
Christmas Eve [*i. e.*, "Christmas Apples"]
April Fool
Pelagea
The Unfortunate Miller
Nocturne: New Moon

The Rogue
 Suppliant
 Autumn [*i. e.*, "Autumn Song"]
 The Well
 Mendacity
 The Apostate
 The Tinker
 The Little Tempest
 Night Piece
 Stay, O Stay
 The Invisible Rain
 The Threshold
 Winter Field

Collected Poems

("Contents" are similarly listed in both the English and the American editions, but the actual order of the poems in the former corresponds to that of the numbers here given in parenthesis.)

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To One Unknown and Gone (38)
To Winter (64)
Truant (1)
Winter Field (31)
Yokohama Garland (20)

3. REPRINT OF "SUPPLIANT"

How shall I make a charter of my desire,
 Or lend my vain love love's authority
 To light one candle at that sacred fire
 Whose plummy smoke washes the sky? Ay me,
 What numbering beats shall my dull heart record
 In urgent chronicle before that shrine
 Whose mightiest instrument is but a word,
 Whose lightest word is an immortal sign!
 O holy rounded sky, enlarge thy bounds,
 Admitting to thy grace my tiny ill;
 'Stablish in me what excellence propounds,
 And what is lack in me fulfil;
 Nor cease until thy favour stains me through
 Even as a lake its sky-retrieving blue.

—*Yokohama Garland*, p. 60.

4. REPRINT OF "WISHES"

Ay, I may wound my heels on the stones of the street,
 And break my heart for the things far out in the world,
 But ever the wish of my mind waits for a thrust from me
 That will not come.

How could I receive my wishes, who had but the heart of a hen?
 And lived but looking at things, and sighing for things
 With the cry of a vexed bird, lonely
 On this flat strand of the sea?

But to lie down now, now in the sand of the shore, and watch the plane,
 The flying plane that hums at the hinge of heaven,
 Or crawls like a flea
 In the skin of the holy dog;

And let me be covered with your caresses, green wandering wave,
 Your curving sea be spilled in my empty heart,
 Lest I live vainly on:
 This is my wish indeed.

—*Coterie*, No. 2 (Sept., 1919): Not reprinted by
 Mr. Coppard in any of his collections.

APPENDIX C

COMPARATIVE REPRINTS OF THE "ADVERTISEMENTS" TO THE ENGLISH AND AMERICAN EDITIONS OF *Collected Poems*

1. "Advertisement" to Eng. edn. (unsigned and undated):

There are several reasons for offering this Collection to the public. One of them, based on an anticipation which I need not specify, is certainly presumptuous; another, based on assumptions I have presumed to make, is not a little expectant; but a more concrete reason, is that whether the public likes them or likes them not, my two previous volumes of poems are no longer obtainable, which to my mind as an artist is a pity, and as a tradesman bad business. The first, *Hips and Haws*, dated 1922 and issued in a small but cheap edition, was exhausted in the customary three or four years, and the second, *Pelagea*, dated 1926 and issued in a small but expensive edition, was over-subscribed before publication. In America the two were combined in a munificent and very expensive tome under the title of *Yokohama Garland*. Since then I have accumulated a number of additional poems, and it seems time to remedy this public inaccessibility and offer the whole bag of tricks in one book at a price which is not likely to provoke the contemptuous sneer or the glare of indignation. Besides, it is now the fashion to publish your Collected Poems on the slightest of grounds whatever their merits, and so I follow fashion, but only thus far. I declare that I have no intention of following it any further by intruding again in a little while with my Selected Poems.

There is nothing for me to say about these imperfect annotations of things seen or felt or imagined—except that I like them myself. Although I am no critic I am a fairly good judge of poetry, and that is not at all an incompatibility. Indeed, were I a critic of poetry I fancy I should be a very uncommon bird in the undergrowth of literature, so rare is the critical gift. But judges abound, and reviewers—like the dukes—are three a penny. One of them accused me of imitating a contemporary whose work I have the misfortune to be quite unable to read. Now a person may conceivably be influenced by work he does not like, but it is improbable that he can be infected in any way by work which he does not know. The desire to copy anyone or to emulate anyone has never come to me, and I am not conscious of the need of such assistance; did I ever fall so low I hope I should have the sense to ape my superiors. It gives me therefore all the more pleasure to point out that one of these pieces, *The Unfortunate Miller*, is of the same metre and shape and theme as a very beautiful lyric called *Lubber Breeze*, by Mr. Sturge Moore. The one wind blows on many a mill, but what comes to the hoppers serves divers purposes.

Possibly this is the smallest volume of Collected Poems ever issued. That fact—not that it may be the smallest, but that it *is* small—pleases me as much as it will please the most drastic taste. If all Collected Poems could be got into as slim a compass it would not take the reader very long to know the worst about them.

2. "Advertisement" to Amer. edn. (printed over author's name and dated "July 19, 1928"):

There are several reasons for offering this collection to the public: one of them, based on certain anticipations which I need not specify, is certainly presumptuous; another, based on certain assumptions I have presumed to make, is not a little expectant; but a more concrete reason is that whether the public likes them or likes them not my two previous volumes of poems are no longer attainable, and to my mind as an artist that is a pity, and as a tradesman bad business. The first, *Hips and Haws*, issued in a small but cheap edition was exhausted in a few years; the second, *Pelagea*, issued also in a small, but expensive, edition was over-subscribed before publication. In America *Hips and Haws* and *Pelagea* were combined in one limited and very expensive volume under the title of *Yokohama Garland*. Since then I have accumulated a number of additional poems and it seems time to remedy this public inaccessibility by offering the whole bag of tricks in one book at a price which is not likely to provoke the contemptuous sneer or the indignant glare. Besides this, it is now the fashion for even mediocrities to issue their Collected Poems, so why not me? Especially as I can faithfully promise not to follow fashion further by intruding again in a few months' time with my Selected Poems.

There is nothing for me to say about these imperfect annotations of things seen and felt except that I like them myself. Although I do not pass for a critic I declare I am quite a good judge of poetry, and that is not at all an incompatibility. Indeed, were I a critic I should be a phenomenon in the world for I never yet encountered one. Reviewers there are in plenty, and judges—like the dukes—are three a penny. One reviewer accused me of imitating a poet whose work I am quite unable to read. Now a writer may conceivably be influenced by work he does not like, but it is improbable that he can be infected by work he does not know. I have never felt a desire to copy anyone, or the need of such assistance; did I ever fall so low I hope I should have the good sense to ape a superior. It gives me therefore all the more pleasure to point out that one of these pieces, *The Unfortunate Miller*, is of the same metre and shape and theme as a very beautiful lyric called *Lubber Breeze* by Mr. Sturge Moore. The same wind blows to many a mill, but they grind their different grain.

Possibly this is the smallest volume of Collected Poems ever issued. That fact pleases me much—not that it may be the smallest, but that it is very small. If all Collected Poems could be got in as small a compass it would not take a reader very long to know the worst about them.

(All of the "Advertisement" in § 2, above, save specific titles, is italicized.)

APPENDIX D

A REFERENCE LIST OF THE TALES INCLUDED IN MR. COPPARD'S COLLECTIONS

Adam and Eve and Pinch Me:

Marching to Zion
 Dusky Ruth
 Weep Not, My Wanton
 Piffingcap
 The King of the World
 Adam and Eve and Pinch Me
 The Princess of Kingdom Gone
 Communion
 The Quiet Woman
 The Trumpeters
 The Angel and the Sweep
 Arabesque: *The Mouse*

Clorinda Walks in Heaven:

The Hurly-Burly
 Clorinda Walks in Heaven
 The Cherry Tree
 The Elixir of Youth
 Felix Tincler
 Craven Arms
 A Broadsheet Ballad
 Cotton
 Pomona's Babe

The Black Dog:

The Black Dog
 Alas, Poor Bollington!

¹ The Coppard "omnibus" (*Fares, Please!*) reprints *The Black Dog*, *The Field of Mustard*, and *Silver Circus*.

The Ballet Girl
 Simple Simon
 The Tiger
 Mordecai and Cocking
 The Man from Kilsheelan (*Cf. Biblio., cit.*)
 Tribute
 The Handsome Lady
 The Fancy Dress Ball
 The Cat, the Dog, and the Bad Old Dame
 The Wife of Ted Wickham
 Tanil
 The Devil in the Churchyard
 Huxley Rustem
 Big Game
 The Poor Man
 Luxury

Fishmonger's Fiddle:

Old Martin
 The Little Mistress
 Willie Waugh
 The Higgler (*Cf. Biblio., cit., anent pirated edn.*)
 Italian Whirligig
 The Jewel of Jeopardy
 Alice Brady
 The Watercress Girl
 At Laban's Well
 A Wildgoose Chase
 Dumbledon Donkey
 A Three-Handed Reel
 The Snare
 Fishmonger's Fiddle
 A Little Boy Lost
 A Diversion with Thomas
 Mr. Lightfoot in the Green Isle

The Field of Mustard:

The Field of Mustard
 Fifty Pounds
 The Truant Hart
 Olive and Camilla

The Man from the Caravan
The Funnel
Christine's Letter
The Bogey Man
The Old Venerable
Judith
The Two Wretches

Silver Circus:

Silver Circus
Darby Dallow Tells His Tale
That Fellow Tolstoy!
Rifki
The Ape and the Ass
The Martyrdom of Solomon
Fine Feathers
The Almanac Man
A Looking-Glass for St. Luke
The Birthday Party
The Third Prize
The Presser
Adolf Plumflower
Purl and Plain
Faithless Phoebe
Polly Morgan

Nixey's Harlequin:

The Green Drake
Count Stefan (*Cf. Biblio., cit.*)
The Limping Lady
Wilt Thou Leave Me Thus?
The Gollan (*Cf. Biblio., cit.*)
The Idle Frumkin
The Post Office and the Serpent
My Hundredth Tale (*Cf. Biblio., cit.*)
Nixey's Harlequin
Dark Knowledge

APPENDIX E

ONE WORD MORE

Since completing this dissertation, I have received my copy (No. 84) of

Easter Day, Mr. Coppard's new poem, which lies outside the scope of my topic, but of which a word may be said.

Easter Day, published in a limited edition (145 copies; no publisher mentioned) at what is a breath-taking price for poor poetry-lovers, is signed and dated Oct., 1931, by the author. It has forty-nine lines, and, save for a single quatrain, is in free verse; charming enough though it is, I shall be surprised if it adds substantially to Mr. Coppard's reputation—despite lines like

"Love is an easy gift,
But love is hard to win."

The musing quality, the freshness in choice of words, and the pictorial element referred to in my comments on the author's verse as a whole are all here; so are the old philosophy—

". . . visions oft are fairer than the view"—
and the old concern with "time"—

"Immuring Time unseals a moment's dream:"

"Time cannot breed the phoenix,
Nor the sea o'erleap its waves."

—This poem, incidentally, is not presented in type, but in facsimile of the author's own hand; the last three lines are in the actual hand.

